TRACTS BY CHRISTIAN SOCIALISTS.

~~VIII.~~

SERIES ON ENGLISH HISTORY.

No. 1

BY A CLERGYMAN.

ADVERTISEMENT.

series of *Tracts on Christian Socialism* was commenced early in the last year. Seven tracts have appeared. Four or five months ago the paper called the *Christian Socialist* was undertaken by one of the writers of the Tracts. It fulfils many of the purposes to which they were originally devoted. It gives an account of the efforts which have been made and are now making for the establishment of Co-operative Associations. It discusses questions relating to their machinery, listens to objections and answers them, explains the principles which, as we think, can alone secure the success of the work. It is addressed specially to the working-classes, and invites contributions from them. It treats of all passing topics in which they are interested. At the same time it notices those more learned and elaborate systems which occupy the minds of the students and thinkers of our day.

Henceforth, therefore, our Tracts may pass over many topics in which Christian Socialists take an interest. They would only say again what had been said better and more concisely elsewhere. But there is a large field of inquiry connected with this social movement, into which a weekly periodical cannot conveniently enter. Several subjects of a purely business-like character (as for instance that of Co-operative Stores) require a connected elucidation and illustration which they could only receive in some pamphlet or tract devoted to them. And there are other questions of a much more general character on which we cannot be silent.

Socialists who are not seeking to reform the world according to a scheme of their own, but to discover the actual laws which

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govern it, should be prepared to examine all manner of facts that bear upon the life and destinies of mankind. Christian Socialists should be prepared to prove that they have not imputed their doctrines to the Bible but have found them there. It is proposed then to begin two or three different series of tracts. There will probably be one on the history of the Ancient World. That may be followed by one on the history of the Christian Church. The present Tract is the first of a course on English History. As these subjects are of general interest, and as no effort will be made to make them bear upon the subject of Socialism, our belief being that the evidence which they afford in favour of it is most strong when the facts are left to speak for themselves, it might have seemed prudent to avoid an offensive name. But "Honesty is the best policy." If we do hold an opinion which our readers in general do not hold, we ought to tell them so beforehand. They will then be upon their guard against our erroneous statements or dangerous inferences. We have no wish to be read only by those upon whom we can impose either. If working-men read these Tracts, they will often find that which will affront their prejudices and excite their suspicions. If members of the upper-class read them, they will of course take nothing for granted. They will give us ample credit for meaning mischief even where it is not quite apparent. If students read them, it will be no doubt for the purpose of discovering for themselves some other and better method than that which we have followed.

Our object in this, or any work in which we may engage, will be accomplished if we convince all these classes that they have a common interest in the proceedings of each other, in the land to which they belong, in the history and prospects of mankind.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

I AM going to write some chapters on English History. The title-page will have told you that I am a Christian Socialist; but you have a right to know more about me than that name will tell you. A Socialist may be a Tory, a Whig, or a Radical—or he may cast aside the opinions of all three, and think that his Socialism is sufficient of itself. If I am a Tory, I shall look at facts from one point of view; if a Whig from another; if a Radical from a third. If I am merely a Socialist, I may probably be unjust to all other classes of thinkers and actors. It is all very well to talk of candour and impartiality. But it is much better to say at the outset what we are, that the reader may be aware of the temptations which we have to become uncandid and partial.

I dare to say I shall seem to be uttering a foolish paradox; but I know that I am speaking the simple truth when I say I am a Tory, a Whig, and a Radical; I do not mean a little bit of one, and a little bit of each of the others; not what is sometimes called an *Eclectic;* there is no name or character I hate more than that; nor yet something new of my own, unlike what all people have been before me; but in the ordinary sense of the words, a downright thorough going Tory—a downright thorough going Whig—a downright thorough going Radical.

I do not wish to startle you or make you think me mad; I shall proceed, therefore, at once to make my assertion good.

I.—What you are afraid of in a Tory of the old stock is that he should give a great prominence to the person and office of the sovereign. You say, "It is worth while to inquire whether monarchy may not be the best form of government for us here and at this time; whether it is not best for us to have a chief or leader; that is an open question. But the old Tory *begins* with the King. He does not argue about monarchy; or if he does he goes off into some insane rhapsody about divine right. He seems as if he thought he might assume this strange person without giving any account of the motives which induced people to set him up, or how he succeeded in setting himself up."

Now I tell you plainly I shall follow that method. I shall not speculate about the way in which we came to have a King. I find one in the history. I find, indeed, oftentimes, a great inclination among the chiefs, as well as among the priests, to treat

him merely as the man of their choice; as one whom they had set up and could pull down. But I find a contradictory feeling to this; that he was there to rule over them and that they were to obey him. I believe the one was an anarchical feeling tending to barbarism; the other, an organic feeling tending to growth and civilization. I do not say that I should wish either away. I believe we wanted both. But I cannot believe that we Englishmen should have had a history if we had not had a King. I cannot put him out and then imagine what sort of people we should have been. I am sure we should not have been the Englishmen we are, but another race of creatures altogether. That is my belief, that is my reading of our annals; therefore you see I am a Tory; not a meek, creditable, well-behaved Conservative; not one who talks (as it is proper people should talk) about upholding institutions and keeping things together as well as we can; but one of the old school such as you do not often meet with in our day. So you see one of my weak points. Watch me well while I am talking about our Kings.

II.—But next I am a Whig. Mr. Macaulay says our history begins with King John, because the barons wrung the great Charter out of him, and because the Charter affirmed that there was an Order which Kings must acknowledge as well as subjects. I do not hold this to be the case. I believe if we pass by our Saxon Kings and our Norman Kings we shall never understand England. But I hold the Charter to be unspeakably important, and for the reason that our Whig writers say that it is important. It did tell the Kings, not for the first time but in plainer language than ever before, "You cannot do as you like; you were never intended to do as you like. A King does not mean a person who can do as he likes. It means quite an opposite thing to that. And any King who takes the fancy into his head that this is his function and privilege, must, and will, be reminded in some tremendous way that he is mistaken." That was said then, and it was said often and often again in our history. The fact was proclaimed that there is a Constitution, an Order in the National Society which cannot be violated without mischiefs coming to it, just like those which come to the natural body when it is out of order. The Whigs say this still; they used to say it with great emphasis. They talked—and not only talked but acted—upon the principle of opposing Privilege to Prerogative, Constitutional Principle to Arbitrary Government. The Tories—our eminent poet Dryden, for instance—called them fools and knaves for doing so. Our modern Radicals often say they were prating pedants for doing it. Mr. Macaulay himself, in one of his articles in the *Edinburgh Review*, only claimed the right "to cant as his fathers canted before him," about Constitutions and

so forth, instead of canting a new cant which he thought the Utilitarians were trying to introduce. But I stick to all this so-called folly, knavery, pedantry, cant. I hold that the doctrine may come to deserve all these names; that it has often been in great danger of deserving them; but that it is in itself right and true, and indispensable to the English historian. So besides being a Tory, I am a Whig—not a graceful, well-conditioned Edinburgh Whig, who preserves an even and beautiful balance by denouncing the fanaticism of the Tories to-day, and the fanaticism of the Radicals to-morrow, while he himself is not bound to any positive conclusions at all, but an old-fashioned, precise, dogmatic Whig—the relic of a nearly extinct species.

III.—But if I am a rampant Tory and a pedantic Whig, how can I make out my pretensions to what some of you will think a really honourable title, that of earnest Radical? There are two sides to the word Radical. First, it has a *negative* side. A Radical is one who does not think that any abuses or corruptions "work well." He thinks it is safe to get rid of them, not safe to retain them. In that sense I am one with him. I hold the maxim to be a vulgar, detestable, accursed one "Abuses are so mixed up with our state of things that if you try to remove them you will destroy the whole system." A system of which that can be truly said, must be destroyed, ought to be destroyed—the sooner the better. And again, I hold this saying to be weak and silly, "My dear sir, those evils you are attacking are not in our Institutions; they are in human nature." To a person who speaks in that way I am wont to make answer, "My dear sir, robbery and murder are not in Institutions, but in human nature. And yet our forefathers thought certain laws for the punishment of actual robberies and murders were desirable. If you like to make an effort for extirpating those principles which produce robbery and murder I shall rejoice, and count you a good Radical. If you likewise are striving to extirpate the principles which produce jobbery I shall rejoice, and count you a good Radical. But you are not a true and righteous man if while you do that you do not wish the particular jobber as well as the particular burglar or assassin to be brought to justice." I am a Radical on that ground. I conceive no evil in the body politic is to be tolerated; that no one should be at his ease while it lasts. And this, perhaps, is the most literal meaning of the name according to etymology. Still it would be absurd to forget that Radicals not only protest against the evils of others, but have a distinct standing ground of their own. Men, they say, actual fighting toiling men, are what we care about; if we cannot get them helped, away with Kings and Constitutions! They go on, "You cannot help our working-men by treating them ever so

kindly and good-naturedly as your vassals or retainers. They must have a place of their own in the Commonwealth. Each of them should be a citizen." And when they come to define a citizen, they say, "Whatever it signifies, this is certainly included in the signification. A citizen should have a vote in the affairs of the nation. Therefore they say 'Let us have manhood suffrage.'"

Now, I do not demur to any of these statements. Tory as I am, Whig as I am, I say,—No King nor Constitution, if the working-men, those who make up the effective population of our country, are not to be the better for them. Further, I agree in the assertion that in order to make the working-men the better for King or Constitution, we ought to aim steadily and consistently at making them citizens; that we should not think the country in a right or true condition, while any man in it is excluded from any one privilege of citizenship. I specially desire that each man should feel his own distinct responsible relation to the body-politic. And since one way in which a man realizes that relation, is by voting for the members of the House of Commons, I desire that each man should become a distinct responsible voter. I like, therefore, the words manhood suffrage a great deal better than the words household suffrage, or any other of the more moderate phrases which are substituted for them. If the word "household" were used in its highest sense, I might see much meaning it. But if it only means the having a house, I think that is a much less thing than the being a man. Now I would not only wish this result to be brought about, but to be brought about as soon as possible. I think it will be a very long time indeed before you get our Legislators to pass a Bill for Manhood Suffrage, and if they did pass such a Bill, I do not think you would have the fruit of it. You would not have manhood suffrage, if you had everybody in the country voting for members of Parliament. It would be as it is now. Multitudes would vote in the way that other people told them to vote. They would not vote with a distinct sense of their own responsibility. And if you carried the ballot, you would not remedy that evil. You would not destroy the evil influences upon people's hearts. You would only now and then get them to say one thing and do another. The way of persuading Parliament to do this is then not the shortest way, but a very long way to manhood suffrage. There is only one way which I believe is longer and more roundabout still, and that is the way of a revolution. But I believe there is a really expeditious way. I find from English history that when the members of the trading-class formed themselves into societies and fellowships for the purposes of their trade, they gradually acquired habits of order and government: they proved that they were men by the power they had of working together, and by the

effects which their work produced. Then it was no more a question whether they should send representatives to the Legislature. They were forced to do it. "We must have the help of your Burghers," the King said. "You shall send them even if they don't like to come. (And many of them did not like to come.) Their advice and their money are indispensable to the State." I believe the same would happen to the working-men, if they proved that they were men and had habits of order, obedience, government in the same way. I think they would get manhood suffrage, nay that it would be thrust upon them, and that they would be worthy of it and able to make the Legislature an immeasurably more living and working body than it is.

IV.—So you see I am a Radical and something more, a Radical and a Socialist to help out my Radicalism and to make it effectual. But you will ask me how I came by this strange combination of opinions? For Socialists think that all Radicalism is swallowed up in their Socialism. Radicals think that all Whiggism is lost and buried in their Radicalism. Whigs think that they can solve all the problems of the land and of the universe by their Whiggism. Tories think if they have got the Sovereign all is settled. To answer this question fully, I should have to go much more into my own biography than I should wish. But I will tell you shortly as much as it concerns you to know.

Most of you read the *Times* newspaper occasionally. There you have a paper as you all know which has been Tory, Whig, Radical, and may some day or other become Socialist. You never can tell exactly what it is going to be at any given time. The people of England like consistency. They, therefore, very frequently curse the *Times*. Yet they read it and sympathise with it. It does in some way or other represent their own feelings. They can't help confessing that it does. And why does it? Because they have in them, one and all, an element of Toryism, Whiggism, Radicalism. Sometimes one is uppermost, sometimes the other. And this paper knows better than any other which is likely to be uppermost at any given time. Its foreign politics may be fairly called Austrian, Russian, or anything else. But their home politics are English to a very remarkable extent. I might wish to deny it, as you may, but I cannot; it is so.

And this fact has been brought home to me by my observations of men of my own standing whom I love and honour, and believe to be as honest as they are able, and of younger men just beginning to think and act for themselves. I know scarcely one who has not been, in the course of a short life, Whig, Tory, and Radical. I may complain; I may say to one and another, "Thou art neither fish nor flesh, I know not where to have thee." I may and do feel

that this vacillation is dangerous to them and dangerous to England. I may see that it often terminates in a contemptuous indifference to all politics, which is shameful in any; absolute destruction to a Briton. I may see coming out of it the Eclecticism to which I alluded before; the source as that sturdy Republican Mazzini tells us of the dishonest, heartless, Godless, Moderatism of Piedmont and of Italy generally. But what is the use of complaining and prophecying? My friends may see just the same tendencies in me which I see in them; no doubt they do. The thing is to seek a remedy for the disease of our times, not to whine over it.

You will easily feel how the whole course of recent English politics, the impossibility of maintaining an administration of one party, the difficulty of combining the elements of several, the eager efforts at union and the disappointment of them, the dislike,—a hearty and honest dislike,—of a no faith in our statesmen, yet the despair of finding a faith in them must have strengthened one's own narrow personal experiences. But neither one nor the other would have helped me much if I had not been forced to meditate on English History. There it seemed to me, I found Toryism, Whiggism, Radicalism, Socialism, all alive and at work, not always at work obviously, but always there, and developed, brought into full manifestation, at their appointed season. I could not reduce them all under some philosophical generalization; if I tried to do it, their worth as actual powers either in the present or past,—let me add still more emphatically—for the future, disappears altogether. They exist as living, distinct, mighty energies. No one of them has yet extinguished the other; I believe in the nature of things it is impossible that any one should. The great question for us to consider is, can they work together? and that question, I believe, the history of our land, fairly studied, will answer. I want to begin it, but I have not yet made quite a clear breast, strange as my confessions have been. I am a parson; before I go on, you ought to know how that fact in my position is connected with my other extravagancies, and how far it is likely to pervert my views of history.

V.—You will be afraid of me for two reasons. You will think that whenever I speak of the doings of the Clergy in history, I shall be inclined to favour them. Only you hope that my prejudices as the member of a particular Church may possibly come in to counteract my professional bias, and may make me see the crimes of Romish priests with tolerable clearness. I may not, you will hope, become utterly blinded by partiality till I have passed the age of the Reformation, and have to deal with the acts of English Divines. But there is another vice by which you are sure I must be infected, and which will confuse my views not of one period

but of all periods. Every Clergyman, as the phrase is, is apt to look at the movements of the world from a theocratic point of view; therefore, he cannot see human acts fairly; he must bring them down to certain religious rules and measures; he must apply to them the maxims of another world, not of this; if not he must smother his own convictions, or he must have none; neither of which conditions of mind is a desirable one, or fits a man to be an historian. I shall take the last point first. I confess that I do look at all events from a theocratical point of view. I believe that this world is God's world, that He is governing it, that it has no order but that which He has imparted to it, that every departure from that order, leads to confusion and anarchy. I cannot therefore, and dare not, talk of God's interferences with this world, and His departure from His own order. I believe that He cannot interfere where He is always ruling, that He never breaks his own order, that what we call miracles, and Scripture speaks of as signs and powers, were assertions and revelations of this order, not violations of it. And this I warn you is no lazy dogma in my mind. I can read no facts of history except by the light of it. I believe God is working always, and that it is our own fault if we do not perceive His working.

Does not that involve considerable respect for my own office, seeing that that office professedly exists to bear witness of this divine government? Assuredly a very great respect for it, a respect for the function of the priest in all times, a belief that he is by his office, whether in his own person or not, a witness for truths which are all-important to human society, and which the members of that society are very apt to forget. I have therfore a respect for my order as an order, a respect which lays me, I conceive under a very solemn obligation, an obligation which those who want that respect cannot feel, to denounce the members of my order more than those of any other, when they become, as all history shows they are apt to become, (and I feel at every moment that I share this tendency with them,) witnesses for themselves instead of God, asserters of righteousness and authority for themselves, instead of asserters of His righteousness and authority. I say this obligation lies very heavily upon me. If you find I am not fulfilling it, be sure that I am gone wrong, that I have yielded to a vile selfish temptation, that the facts of the history, when you find them out, will confute me.

Observe that this principle extends in both aspects of it to the times before the Reformation as much as to the times after. The priest in both is a witness for God's dominion; the priest in both has been tempted to set up his own dominion. If I deal fairly with history, I shall point out to you when the priest before the

Reformation fulfilled the first task, though he may have been called a servant of the Pope; and when the priest in the latter case gave way to the selfish temptation, though he may have renounced the Pope. If I hold to the theocratic principle, that is to say, if I hold that God is a real present Ruler of the world, I must take that course. If I lose hold of that principle, I shall take some other. I hate the popedom from my heart, because I believe it interferes with God's government of the world and puts itself in its place. I have no reason for hating it but that. And therefore I am bound by hatred of it to hate whatever else interferes with the recognition of this government. You may ask whether I think the reformed English Church interferes with it or has ever done so. No, not the English Church, or any Church; but English Churchmen and all other Churchmen very often; and I believe they will go on doing so, till they fully recognize God's rule over all human society, and that then they will do it no more, and will not separate themselves from one another any more.

But am I not bound by my position to shape facts according to certain religious notions; to make them give out a moral? I conceive that my position obliges me *not* to do this; that for any man to do it is a sin, that in me it would be a heinous sin. For I must look upon facts as God facts; how dare I turn and twist them that they may illustrate a certain maxim or inference of mine? I am not to plead for religion, but to speak of an actual world in which I hold that God is working and reigning. My business, therefore, is with the actual proceedings of human beings. If I am not a party politician it is in a great measure because I am a Clergyman. I should probably have felt myself tied to some class of society, and bound to hold fast the form of opinion which was most popular in it. Being a Clergyman, I feel that I belong to no class, that I am sent into the world to be the minister of all. Being a Clergyman, I feel that my business is to assert that Kings reign by God's appointment and authority, that there is an Order and Constitution which God has established in every country, that God honours every man and intends every man to have a place in his Commonwealth; that property, though a holy thing, is not the chief thing; that God has meant men to be associates and fellow-workers in His vineyard, not rivals and self-seekers.

You now know all about me that you need to know. The next time we meet, I shall speak of things more worth your hearing.

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TRACTS BY CHRISTIAN SOCIALISTS.

II.

CHEAP CLOTHES AND NASTY.

BY PARSON LOT.

(Second Edition.)

"Nata servituti mancipia semel veneunt, atque ultro à domino aluntur: Britanni servitutem suam quotidie emunt, quotidie pascunt."—TACITUS AGRICOLA.

KING RYENCE, says the legend of Prince Arthur, wore a paletot trimmed with kings' beards. In the first French Revolution (so Carlyle assures us) there were at Meudon, tanneries of human skins. Mammon, at once tyrant and revolutionary, follows both these noble examples—in a more respectable way, doubtless, for Mammon hates cruelty; bodily pain is his devil—the worst evil of which he, in his effeminacy, can conceive. So he shrieks benevolently when a drunken soldier is flogged; but he trims his paletots, and adorns his legs, with the flesh of men and the skins of women, with degradation, pestilence, heathendom, and despair; and then chuckles self-complacently over the smallness of his tailors' bills. Hypocrite!—straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel! What is flogging, or hanging, King Ryence's paletot, or the tanneries of Meudon, to the slavery, starvation, waste of life, year-long imprisonment in dungeons, narrower and fouler than those of the Inquisition, which goes on among thousands of free English clothes-makers at this day?

"The man is mad," says Mammon, smiling supercilious pity. Yes, Mammon; mad as Paul before Festus; and for much the same reason, too. Much learning has made us mad. From two articles in the *Morning Chronicle* of Friday, Dec. 14th and Tuesday Dec. 18th, 1849, on the Condition of the Working Tailors, we learnt too much to leave us altogether masters of ourselves. But there is method in our madness; we can give reasons for it—satisfactory to ourselves, perhaps also to Him who made us, and

you, and all tailors likewise. Will you, freshly bedizened, you and your footmen, from Nebuchadnezzar and Co.'s "Emporium of fashion," hear a little about how your finery is made? You are always calling out for facts, and have a firm belief in salvation by statistics. Listen to a few.

The Metropolitan Commissioner of the *Morning Chronicle* called two meetings of the Working Tailors, one in Shadwell, and the other at the Hanover-square Rooms, in order to ascertain their condition from their own lips. Both meetings were crowded. At the Hanover-square Rooms there were more than one thousand men; they were altogether unanimous in their descriptions of the misery and slavery which they endured. It appears that there are two distinct tailor trades—the "honourable" trade, now almost confined to the West End, and rapidly dying out there, and the "dishonourable" trade of the show-shops and slop-shops—the plate-glass palaces, where gents—and, alas! those who would be indignant at that name—buy their cheap-and-nasty clothes. The two names are the tailors' own slang; slang is true and expressive enough, though, now and then. The honourable shops in the West End number only sixty; the dishonourable, four hundred and more; while at the East End the dishonourable trade has it all its own way. The honourable part of the trade is declining at the rate of one hundred and fifty journeymen per year; the dishonourable increasing at such a rate that, in twenty years, it will have absorbed the whole tailoring trade, which employs upwards of twenty-one thousand journeymen. At the honourable shops, the work is done, as it was universally thirty years ago, on the premises and at good wages. In the dishonourable trade, the work is taken home by the men, to be done at the very lowest possible prices, which decrease year by year, almost month by month. At the honourable shops, from 36*s.* to 24*s.* is paid for a piece of work for which the dishonourable shop pays from 22*s.* to 9*s.* But not to the workmen; happy is he if he really gets two-thirds, or half of that. For at the honourable shops, the master deals directly with his workmen; while at the dishonourable ones, the greater part of the work, if not the whole, is let out to contractors, or middle-men—"*sweaters*," as their victims significantly call them—who, in their turn, let it out again, sometimes to the workmen, sometimes to fresh middle-men; so that out of the price paid for labour on each article, not only the workmen, but the sweater, and perhaps the sweater's sweater, and a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, have to draw their profit. And when the labour price has been already beaten down to the lowest possible, how much remains for the workmen after all these deductions, let the poor fellows themselves say!

One working tailor (at the Hanover Square Rooms meeting)

"mentioned a number of shops, both at the east and west ends, whose work was all taken by sweaters; and several of these shops were under royal and noble patronage. There was one notorious sweater who kept his carriage. He was a Jew, and of course, he gave a preference to his own sect. Thus another Jew received it from him second hand and at a lower rate; then it went to a third —till it came to the unfortunate Christian at perhaps the eighth rate, and he performed the work at barely living prices: this same Jew required a deposit of 5*l.* in money before he would give out a single garment to be made. He need not describe the misery which this system entailed upon the workmen. It was well known; but it was almost impossible, except for those who had been at the two, to form an idea of the difference between the present meeting and one at the East-end, where all who attended worked for slop-shops and sweaters. The present was a highly respectable assembly: the other presented no other appearance but those of misery and degradation."

Another says—"We have all worked in the honourable trade, so we know the regular prices from our own personal experience. Taking the bad work with the good work, we might earn 11*s.* a-week upon an average. Sometimes we do earn as much as 15*s.*; but, to do this, we are obliged to take part of our work home to our wives and daughters. We are not always fully employed. We are nearly half our time idle. Hence, our earnings are, upon an average throughout the year, not more than 5*s.* 6*d.* a-week." "Very often I have made only 3*s.* 4*d.* in the week," said one. "That's common enough with us all, I can assure you," said another. "Last week my wages was 7*s.* 6*d.*," declared one. "I earned 6*s.* 4*d.*" exclaimed the second. "My wages came to 9*s.* 2*d.* The week before I got 6*s.* 3*d.*" "I made 7*s.* 9*d.*," and "I, 7*s.* or 8*s.*, I can't exactly remember which." "This is what we term the best part of our winter season. The reason why we are so long idle is because more hands than are wanted are kept on the premises, so that in case of a press of work coming in, our employers can have it done immediately. Under the day-work system no master tailor had more men on the premises than he could keep continually going; but since the change to the piece-work system, masters made a practice of engaging double the quantity of hands that they have any need for, so that an order may be executed "at the shortest possible notice," if requisite. A man must not leave the premises when unemployed,—if he does, he loses his chance of work coming in. I have been there four days together, and had not a stitch of work to do." "Yes; that is common enough." "Ay, and then you're told if you complain, you can go, if you don't like it. I am sure twelve hands would do all they have done at home, and yet they keep forty of us. It's generally remarked, that how-

ever strong and healthy a man may be when he goes to work at that shop, in a month's time he'll be a complete shadow, and have almost all his clothes in pawn. By Sunday morning, he has no money at all left, and he has to subsist till the following Saturday upon about a pint of weak tea, and four slices of bread and butter per day!!!"

"Another of the reasons for the sweaters keeping more hands than they want is, the men generally have their meals with them. The more men they have with them the more breakfasts and teas they supply, and the more profit they make. The men usually have to pay 4*d.*, and very often 5*d.* for their breakfast, and the same for their tea. The tea or breakfast is mostly a pint of tea or coffee, and three to four slices of bread and butter. *I worked for one sweater who almost starved the men; the smallest eater there would not have had enough if he had got three times as much. They had only three thin slices of bread and butter, not sufficient for a child, and the tea was both weak and bad. The whole meal could not have stood him in* 2*d. a head, and what made it worse was, that the men who worked there couldn't afford to have dinners, so that they were starved to the bone.* The sweater's men generally lodge where they work. A sweater usually keeps about six men. These occupy two small garrets; one room is called the kitchen, and the other the workshop; and here the whole of the six men, and the sweater, his wife, and family, live and sleep. One sweater *I worked with had four children and six men, and they, together with his wife, sister-in-law, and himself, all lived in two rooms, the largest of which was about eight feet by ten. We worked in the smallest room, and slept there as well—all six of us. There were two turn-up beds in it, and we slept three in a bed. There was no chimney, and indeed, no ventilation whatever. I was near losing my life there—the foul air of so many people working all day in the place, and sleeping there at night, was quite suffocating. Almost all the men were consumptive, and I myself attended the dispensary for disease of the lungs. The room in which we all slept was not more than six feet square. We were all sick and weak, and loath to work.* Each of the six of us paid 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week for our lodging, or 15*s.* altogether, and I am sure such a room as we slept and worked in might be had for 1*s.* a-week; you can get a room with a fire-place for 1*s.* 6*d.* The usual sum that the men working for sweaters pay for their tea, breakfasts, and lodging is 6*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* a week, and they seldom earn more money in the week. Occasionally at the week's end, they are in debt to the sweater. This is seldom for more than 6*d.*, for the sweater will not give them victuals if he has no work for them to do. Many who live and work at the sweater's are married men, and are obliged to keep their wives and children in lodgings by themselves. Some send

them to the workhouse, others to their friends in the country. Besides the profit of the board and lodging, the sweater takes 6*d.* out of the price paid for every garment under 10*s.*; some take 1*s.*, and I do know of one who takes as much as 2*s.* This man works for a large show-shop at the West End. The usual profit of the sweater, over and above the board and lodging, is 2*s.* out of every pound. Those who work for sweaters soon lose their clothes, and are unable to seek for other work, because they have not a coat to their back to go and seek it in. *Last week, I worked with another man at a coat for one of her Majesty's ministers, and my partner never broke his fast while he was making his half of it.* The minister dealt at a cheap West-end show-shop. All the workman had, the whole of the day-and-a-half he was making the coat, was a little tea. But sweaters' work is not so bad as government work after all. At that, we cannot make more than 4*s.* or 5*s.* a-week altogether—that is, counting the time we are running after it, of course. *Government contract work is the worst of all, and the starved-out and sweated-out tailor's last resource.* But still, government does not do the regular trade so much harm as the cheap show and slop-shops. These houses have ruined thousands. They have cut down the prices, so that men cannot live at the work; and the masters who did and would pay better wages, are reducing the workmen's pay every day. They say they must either compete with the large show-shops or go into the *Gazette.*"

Sweet competition! Heavenly maid!—Now-a-days hymned alike by penny-a-liners and philosophers as the ground of all society—the only real preserver of the earth! Why not of Heaven, too? Perhaps there is competition among the angels, and Gabriel and Raphael have won their rank by doing the maximum of worship on the minimum of grace? We shall know some day. In the meanwhile, "these are thy works, thou Parent of all good!" Man eating man, eaten by man, in every variety of degree and method! Why does not some enthusiastic political economist write an epic on "The Consecration of Cannibalism?"

But if any one finds it pleasant to his soul to believe the poor journeyman's statements exaggerated, let him listen to one of the sweaters themselves:—

"I wish," says he, "that others did for the men as decently as I do. I know there are many who are living entirely upon them. Some employ as many as fourteen men. I myself worked in the house of a man who did this. The chief part of us lived, and worked, and slept together in two rooms, on the second floor. They charged 2*s.* 6*d.* per head for the lodging alone. Twelve of the workmen, I am sure, lodged in the house, and these paid altogether 30*s.* a-week rent to the sweater. I should think the sweater paid

8*s.* a-week for the rooms—so that he gained at least 22*s.* clear, out of the lodging of these men, and stood at no rent himself. For the living of the men he charged—5*d.* for breakfasts, and the same for teas, and 8*d.* for dinner—or at the rate of 10*s.* 6*d.* each per head. Taking one with the other, and considering the manner in which they lived, I am certain that the cost for keeping each of them could not have been more than 5*s.* This would leave 5*s.* 6*d.* clear profit on the board of each of the twelve men, or, altogether, 3*l.* 6*s.* per week; and this, added to the 1*l.* 2*s.* profit on the rent, would give 4*l.* 8*s.* for the sweater's gross profit on the board and lodging of the workmen in his place. But, besides this, he got 1*s.* out of each coat made on his premises, and there were twenty-one coats made there, upon an average, every week; so that, altogether, the sweater's clear gains out of the men, were 5*l.* 9*s.* every week. Each man made about a coat and a half in the course of the seven days (*for they all worked on a Sunday—they were generally told to 'borrow a day of the Lord.'*) For this coat and a half, each hand got 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, and out of it he had to pay 13*s.* for board and lodging; so that there was 9*s.* 6*d.* clear left. These are the profits of the sweater, and the earnings of the men engaged under him, when working for the first-rate houses. But many of the cheap houses pay as low as 8*s.* for the making of each dress and frock coat, and some of them as low as 6*s.* Hence the earnings of the men at such work would be from 9*s.* to 12*s.* per week, and the cost of their board and lodging without dinners, for these they seldom have, would be from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 8*s.* per week. Indeed, the men working under sweaters at such prices generally consider themselves well off if they have a shilling or two in their pockets for Sunday. The profits of the sweater, however, would be from 4*l.* to 5*l.* out of twelve men, working on his premises. The usual number of men working under each sweater is about six individuals: and the average rate of profit, about 2*l.* 10*s.*, without the sweater doing any work himself. It is very often the case that a man working under a sweater is obliged to pawn his own coat to get any pocket-money that he may require. Over and over again the sweater makes out that he is in his debt from 1*s.* to 2*s.* at the end of the week, and when the man's coat is in pledge, he is compelled to remain imprisoned in the sweater's lodgings for months together. In some sweating places, there is an old coat kept called a "reliever," and this is borrowed by such men as have none of their own to go out in. There are very few of the sweater's men who have a coat to their backs or a shoe to their feet to come out into the streets on Sunday. Down about Fulwood's-rents, Holborn, I am sure I would not give 6*d.* for the clothes that are on a dozen of them; and it is surprising to me, working and living together in such numbers and in such small close rooms, in narrow close back courts as they

do, that they are not all swept off by some pestilence. I myself have seen half-a-dozen men at work in a room that was a little better than a bedstead long. It was as much as one could do to move between the wall and the bedstead when it was down. There were two bedsteads in this room, and they nearly filled the place when they were down. The ceiling was so low, that I couldn't stand upright in the room. There was no ventilation in the place. There was no fireplace, and only a small window. When the window was open, you could nearly touch the houses at the back, and if the room had not been at the top of the house, the men could not have seen at all in the place. The staircase was so narrow, steep, and dark, that it was difficult to grope your way to the top of the house—it was like going up a steeple. This is the usual kind of place in which the sweater's men are lodged. The reason why there are so many Irishmen working for the sweaters is, because they are seduced over to this country by the prospect of high wages and plenty of work. They are brought over by the Cork boats at 10*s.* a-head, and when they once get here, the prices they receive are so small, that they are unable to go back. In less than a week after they get here, their clothes are all pledged, and they are obliged to continue working under the sweaters.

"The extent to which this system of 'street-kidnapping' is carried on is frightful. Young tailors, fresh from the country, are decoyed by the sweaters' wives into their miserable dens, under extravagant promises of employment, to find themselves deceived, imprisoned, and starved, often unable to make their escape for months—perhaps years; and then only fleeing from one dungeon to another as abominable."

In the meantime, the profits of the beasts of prey who live on these poor fellows—both masters and sweaters—seem as prodigious as their cruelty.

Hear another working tailor on this point:—"In 1844, I belonged to the honourable part of the trade. Our house of call supplied the present show-shop with men to work on the premises. The prices then paid were at the rate of 6*d.* per hour. For the same driving capes that they paid 18*s.* then, they give only 12*s.* for now. For the dress and frock coats they gave 15*s.* then, and now they are 14*s.* The paletots and shooting coats were 12*s.*; there was no coat made on the premises under that sum. At the end of the season, they wanted to reduce the paletots to 9*s.* The men refused to make them at that price, when other houses were paying as much as 15*s.* for them. The consequence of this was, the house discharged all the men, and got a Jew middleman from the neighbourhood of Petticoat-lane, to agree to do them all at 7*s.* 6*d.* a-piece. The Jew employed all the poor people who were at work for the slop warehouses in Houndsditch and its vicinity. This

Jew makes on an average 500 paletots a-week. The Jew gets 2*s.* 6*d.* profit out of each, and having no sewing trimmings allowed to him, he makes the workpeople find them. The saving in trimmings alone to the firm, since the workmen left the premises, must have realized a small fortune to them. Calculating men, women, and children, I have heard it said that the cheap house at the West-end employs 1000 hands. The trimmings for the work done by these, would be about 6*d.* a-week per head, so that the saving to the house since the men worked on the premises has been no less than 1300*l.* a-year, and all this taken out of the pockets of the poor. The Jew who contracts for making the paletots is no tailor at all. A few years ago he sold sponges in the street, and now he rides in his carriage. The Jew's profits are 500 half-crowns, or 60*l.* odd, per week—that is upwards of 3000*l.* a-year. Women are mostly engaged at the paletot work. When I came to work for the cheap show-shop I had 5*l.* 10*s.* in the saving bank; now I have not a halfpenny in it. All I had saved went little by little to keep me and my family. I have always made a point of putting some money by when I could afford it, but since I have been at this work it has been as much as I could do to *live*, much more to *save*. One of the firm for which I work has been heard publicly to declare that he employed 1000 hands constantly. Now the earnings of these at the honourable part of the trade would be upon an average, taking the skilful with the unskilful, 15*s.* a-week each, or 39,000*l.* a-year. But since they discharged the men from off their premises, they have cut down the wages of the workmen one-half—taking one garment with another—*though the selling prices remain the same to the public*, so that they have saved by the reduction of the workmens' wages no less than 19,500*l.* per year. Every other quarter of a year something has been 'docked' off our earnings, until it is almost impossible for men with families to live decently by their labour; and now, for the first time, they pretend to feel for them. They even talk of erecting a school for the children of their workpeople; but where is the use of their erecting schools, when they know as well as we do that, at the wages they pay, the children must be working for their fathers at home? They had much better erect workshops, and employ the men on the premises at fair living wages, and then the men could educate their own children, without being indebted to their charity."

On this last question of what the master-cannibals had "much better do," we have somewhat to say presently. In the meantime, hear another of the things which they had much better *not* do. "Part of the fraud and deception of the slop trade consists in the mode in which the public are made believe that the men working for such establishments earn more money than they really do. The plan practised is similar to that adopted by the army clothier, who

made out that the men working on his establishment made per week from 15*s.* to 17*s.* each; whereas, on inquiry, it was found that a considerable sum was paid out of that to those who helped to do the looping for those who took it home. When a coat is given to me to make, a ticket is handed to me with the garment, similar to this one which I have obtained from a friend of mine.

448
Mr. *Smith* 6675 Made by *M*
Ze = 12*s.* = *lined lustre*
quilted double stitched
each side seams
448. No. 6675.
o'clock *Friday*
Mr. *Smith*

On this you see the price is marked at 12*s.*," continued my informant, "and supposing that I, with two others, could make three of these garments in the week, the sum of thirty-six shillings would stand in the books of the establishment, as the amount earned by me in that space of time. This would be sure to be exhibited to the customers, immediately that there was the least outcry made about the starvation price they paid for their work, as a proof that the workpeople engaged on their establishment received the full prices; whereas, of that 36*s.* entered against my name, *I should have had to pay* 24*s. to those who assisted me;* besides this, my share of the trimmings and expenses would have been 1*s.* 6*d.*, and probably my share of the fires would be 1*s.* more; so that the real fact would be, that I should make 9*s.* 6*d.* clear, and this it would be almost impossible to do, if I did not work long over hours. I am obliged to keep my wife continually at work helping me, in order to live."

In short, the condition of these men is far worse than that of the wretched labourers of Wilts or Dorset. Their earnings are as low and often lower; their trade requires a far longer instruction, far greater skill and shrewdness; their rent and food are more expensive; and their hours of work, while they have work, more than half as long again. Conceive sixteen or eighteen hours of skilled labour in a stifling and fetid chamber, earning not much more than 6*s.* 6*d.* or 7*s.* a week! And, as has been already mentioned in one case, the man who will earn even that, must work all Sunday. He is even liable to be thrown out of his work for refusing to work on Sunday. Why not? Is there anything about one idle day in seven to be found among the traditions of Mam-

mon? When the demand comes, the supply must come; and will, in spite of foolish auld-warld notion about keeping days holy—or keeping contracts holy either, for, indeed, Mammon has no conscience—right and wrong are not words expressible by any commercial laws yet in vogue; and therefore it appears that to earn this wretched pittance is by no means to get it. "For," says one, and the practice is asserted to be general, almost universal, "there is at our establishment a mode of reducing the price of our labour even lower than we have mentioned. The prices we have stated are those *nominally* paid for making the garments; but it is not an uncommon thing in our shop for a man to make a garment, and to receive nothing at all for it. I remember a man once having a waistcoat to do, the price of making which was 2*s.*, and when he gave the job in he was told that he owed the establishment 6*d.* The manner in which this is brought about is by a system of fines. We are fined if we are behind time with our job, 6*d.* the first hour, and 3*d.* for each hour that we are late." "I have known as much as 7*s.* 6*d.* to be deducted off the price of a coat on the score of want of punctuality," one said; "and, indeed, very often the whole money is stopped. It would appear, as if our employers themselves strove to make us late with our work, and so have an opportunity of cutting down the price paid for our labour. They frequently put off giving out the trimmings to us till the time at which the coat is due has expired. If to the trimmer we return an answer that is considered 'saucy,' we are fined 6*d.* or 1*s.*, according to the trimmer's temper." "I was called a thief," another of the three declared, "and because I told the man I would not submit to such language, I was fined 6*d.* These are the principal of the in-door fines. The out-door fines are still more iniquitous. There are full a dozen more fines for minor offences; indeed, we are fined upon every petty pretext. We never know what we have to take on a Saturday, for the meanest advantages are taken to reduce our wages. If we object to pay these fines, we are told that we may leave; but they know full well that we are afraid to throw ourssl-ves out of work."

Folks are getting somewhat tired of the old rodomontade that a slave is free the moment he sets foot on British soil! Stuff!—are these tailors free? Put any conceivable sense you will on the word, and then say—are they free? We have, thank God, emancipated the black slaves; it would seem a not inconsistent sequel to that act to set about emancipating these white ones. Oh! we forgot: there is an infinite difference between the two cases—the black slaves worked for our colonies; the white slaves work for *us*. But, indeed, if, as some preach, self-interest is the mainspring of all human action, it is difficult to see who will step forward to emancipate the said white slaves; for all classes seem to consider it

equally their interest to keep them as they are; all classes, though by their own confession they are ashamed, are yet not afraid to profit by the system which keeps them down

Not only the master tailors and their underlings, but the retail tradesmen, too, make their profit out of these abominations. By a method which smacks at first sight somewhat of benevolence, but proves itself in practice to be one of those "precious balms which break," not "the head," (for that would savour of violence, and might possibly give some bodily pain, a thing intolerable to the nerves of Mammon) but the heart— an organ which, being spiritual, can of course be recognised by no laws of police or commerce. The object of the State, we are told, is "the conservation of body and goods;" there is nothing in that about broken hearts; nothing which should make it a duty to forbid such a system as a working tailor here describes—

"Fifteen or twenty years ago, such a thing as a journeyman tailor having to give security before he could get work was unknown; but now I and such as myself could not get a stitch to do first handed, if we did not either procure the security of some householder, or deposit 5*l.* in the hands of the employer. The reason of this is, the journeymen are so badly paid, that the employers know they can barely live on what they get, and consequently they are often driven to pawn the garments given out to them, in order to save themselves and their families from starving. If the journeyman can manage to scrape together 5*l.*, he has to leave it in the hands of his employer all the time that he is working for the house. I know one person who gives out the work for a fashionable West End slop-shop will not take household security, and requires 5*l.* from each hand. I am informed by one of the parties who worked for this man that he has as many as 150 hands in his employ, and that each of these has placed 5*l.* in his hands, so that altogether the poor people have handed over 750*l.* to increase the capital upon which he trades, and for which he pays no interest whatsoever."

This recals a similar case, (mentioned by a poor stay-stitcher in another letter, published in the *Morning Chronicle*), of a large wholesale staymaker in the City, who had amassed a large fortune by beginning to trade upon the 5*s.* which he demanded to be left in his hands by his workpeople before he gave them employment.

"Two or three years back one of the slop-sellers at the East End became bankrupt, and the poor people lost all the money that had been deposited as security for work in his hands. The journeymen who get the security of householders are enabled to do so by a system which is now in general practice at the East End. Several bakers, publicans, chandler-shop keepers, and coal-shed keepers, make a trade of becoming security for those seeking slop-work. They consent to be responsible for the workpeople upon the

condition of the men dealing at their shops. The workpeople who require such security are generally very good customers, from the fact of their either having large families, all engaged in the same work, or else several females or males working under them, and living at their house. The parties who become securities thus not only greatly increase their trade, but furnish a second-rate article at a first-rate price. It is useless to complain of the bad quality or high price of the articles supplied by the securities, for the shopkeepers know, as well as the workpeople, that it is impossible for the hands to leave them without losing their work. I know one baker whose security was refused at the slop-shop because he was already responsible for so many, and he begged the publican to be his deputy, so that by this means the workpeople were obliged to deal at both baker's and publican's too. I never heard of a butcher making a trade of becoming security, *because the slop-work people cannot afford to consume much meat.*

"The same system is also pursed by lodging-house keepers. They will become responsible if the workmen requiring security will undertake to lodge at their house."

But of course the men most interested in keeping up the system are those who buy the clothes of these cheap shops. And who are they? Not merely the blackguard Gent—the butt of Albert Smith and Punch, who flaunts at the Casinos and Cremorne Gardens in vulgar finery wrung out of the souls and bodies of the poor; not merely the poor lawyer's clerk or reduced half-pay officer who has to struggle to look as respectable as his class commands him to look on a pittance often no larger than that of the day-labourer—no, strange to say—and yet not strange, considering our modern eleventh commandment "Buy cheap and sell dear,"—the richest as well as the poorest imitate the example of King Ryence and the tanners of Meudon. At a great show establishment—to take one instance out of many—the very one where, as we heard just now, "however strong and healthy a man may be when he goes to work at that shop, in a month's time he will be a complete shadow, and have almost all his clothes in pawn"—

"We have also made garments for Sir ——— ———, Sir ——— ———, Alderman ———, Dr. ——— and Dr. ———. We make for several of the aristocracy. We cannot say whom, because the tickets frequently come to us as Lord ——— and the Marquis of ———. This could not be a Jew's trick, because the buttons on the liveries had coronets upon them. And again, we know the house is patronized largely by the aristocracy, clergy, and gentry, by the number of court-suits and liveries, surplices, regimentals, and ladies' riding-habits that we continually have to make up. *There are more clergymen among the customers than any other class, and often we have to work at home upon the Sunday at their*

clothes, in order to get a living. The customers are mostly ashamed of dealing at this house, for the men who take the clothes to the customers' houses in the cart have directions to pull up at the corner of the street. We had a good proof of the dislike of gentlefolks to have it known that they dealt at that shop for their clothes, for when the trowsers buttons were stamped with the name of the firm, we used to have the garments returned, daily, to have other buttons put on them, and now the buttons are unstamped!"

We shall make no comment on this extract. It needs none. If these men know how their clothes are made, they are past contempt. Afraid of man, and not afraid of God! As if His eye could not see the cart laden with the plunder of the poor because it stopped round the corner! If, on the other hand, they do *not* know these things,—and doubtless the majority do not,—it is their sin that they do not know it. Woe to a society whose only apology to God and man is, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Men ought to know the condition of those by whose labour they live. Had the question been the investment of a few pounds in a speculation, these gentlemen would have been careful enough about good security. Ought they to take no security when they invest their money in clothes, that they are not putting on their backs accursed garments, offered in sacrifice to devils, reeking with the sighs of the starving, tainted—yes, tainted, indeed, for it comes out now that diseases numberless are carried home in these same garments from the miserable abodes where they are made. Evidence to this effect was given in 1844; but Mammon was too busy to attend to it. These wretched creatures, when they have pawned their own clothes and bedding, will use as substitutes the very garments they are making. So Lord ——'s coat has been seen covering a group of children blotched with small pox. The Rev. D—— finds himself suddenly unpresentable from a cutaneous disease, which it is not polite to mention on the south of the Tweed, little dreaming that the shivering dirty being who made his coat has been sitting with his arms in the sleeves for warmth while he stitched at the tails. The charming Miss C—— is swept off by typhus or scarlatina, and her parents talk about "God's heavy judgment and visitation"—had they tracked the girl's new riding habit back to the stifling undrained hovel where it served as a blanket to the fever-stricken slop-worker, they would have seen *why* God had visited them, seen that His judgments are true judgments, and give His plain opinion of the system which "speaketh good of the covetous whom God abhorreth"—a system, to use the words of the *Morning Chronicle's* correspondent, "unheard of and unparalleled in the history of any country—a scheme so deeply laid for the introduction and supply of under-paid labour to the market, that it is impossible for the working-man not to sink and be degraded by it into the lowest depths of wretchedness and infamy"—"a system which is

steadily and gradually increasing, and sucking more and more victims out of the honourable trade, who are really intelligent artizans, living in comparative comfort and civilization, into the dishonourable or sweating trade in which the slop-workers are generally almost brutified by their incessant toil, wretched pay, miserable food, and filthy homes."

But to us, almost the worst feature in the whole matter is, that the government are not merely parties to, but actually the originators of this system. The contract system, as a working tailor stated in the name of the rest, "had been mainly instrumental in destroying the living wages of the working-man. Now, the government were the sole originators of the system of contracts and of sweating. Forty years ago, there was nothing known of contracts, except government contracts; and at that period the contractors were confined to making slops for the navy, the army, and the West India slaves. It was never dreamt of then, that such a system was to come into operation in the better classes of trade, till ultimately it was destructive of masters as well as men. The government having been the cause of the contract system, and, consequently of the sweating system, he called upon them to abandon it. The sweating system had established the show shops and the ticket system, both of which were countenanced by the government, till it had become a fashion to support them."

"Even the court assisted to keep the system in fashion, and the royal arms and royal warrants were now exhibited common enough by slop-sellers."

"Government said, its duty was to do justice. But was it consistent with justice to pay only 2*s.* 6*d.* for making navy jackets, which would be paid 10*s.* for by every 'honourable' tradesman? Was it consistent with justice for the government to pay for Royal Marine clothing (private's coat and epaulettes) 1*s.* 9*d.*? Was it consistent with justice for the government to pay for making a pair of trowsers (four or five hours' work) only 2½*d.*? And yet, when a contractor, noted for paying just wages to those he employed, brought this under the consideration of the Admiralty, they declared they had nothing to do with it. Here is their answer:—

"Admiralty, March 19, 1847.

"Sir—Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, your letter of the 8th instant, calling their attention to the extremely low prices paid for making up articles of clothing, provided for her Majesty's naval service, I am commanded by their lordships to acquaint you, that they have no control whatever over the wages paid for making up contract clothing. Their duty is to take care that the articles supplied are of good quality, and ell made: the cost of the material and the workmanship are mat-

ters which rest with the contractor; and if the public were to pay him a higher price than that demanded, it would not ensure any advantage to the men employed by him, as their wages depend upon the amount of competition for employment amongst themselves.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"H. G. WARD."

"W. Shaw, Esq."

Oh most impotent conclusion, however officially cautious, and "philosophically" correct! Even if the wages did depend entirely on the amount of competition, on whom does the amount of competition depend? Merely on the gross numbers of the workmen? Somewhat too, one would think, on the system according to which the labour and the wages are distributed. But right or wrong, is it not a pleasant answer for the poor working tailors, and one likely to increase their faith, hope, and charity towards the present commercial system, and those who deny the possibility of any other?

"The government," says another tailor at the same meeting, "had really been the means of reducing prices in the tailoring trade to so low a scale that no human being, whatever his industry, could live and be happy in his lot. The government were really responsible for the first introduction of female labour. He would clearly prove what he had stated. He would refer first to the army clothing. Our soldiers were comfortably clothed, as they had a right to be; but surely the men who made the clothing which was so comfortable, ought to be paid for their labour so as to be able to keep themselves comfortable and their families virtuous. But it was in evidence, that the persons working upon army clothing could not, upon an average, earn more than 1*s.* a-day. Another government department, the post-office, afforded a considerable amount of employment to tailors; but those who worked upon the post-office clothing earned, at the most, only 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. The police clothing was another considerable branch of tailoring; this, like the others, ought to be paid for at living prices; but the men at work at it could only earn 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day, supposing them to work hard all the time, fourteen or fifteen hours. The custom house clothing gave about the same prices. Now, all these sorts of work were performed by time-workers, who, as a natural consequence of the wages they received, were the most miserable of human beings. Husband, wife, and family all worked at it; they just tried to breathe upon it; to live, it never could be called. *Yet the same government which paid such wretched wages, called upon these wretched people to be industrious, to be virtuous, and happy.* How was it possible, whatever their industry, to be virtuous and happy? The fact was, the men who, at a slack season, had been compelled to

fall back upon these kinds of work, became so beggared and broken down by it, notwithstanding the assistance of their wives and families, that they were never able to rise out of it."

And now comes the question—What is to be done with these poor tailors, to the number of between fifteen and twenty thousand? Their condition, as it stands, is simply one of ever-increasing darkness and despair. The system which is ruining them is daily spreading, deepening. While we write, fresh victims are being driven by penury into the slop-working trade, fresh depreciations of labour are taking place. Like Ulysses' companions in the cave of Polyphemus, the only question among them is, to scramble so far back as to have *a chance of being eaten last.* Before them is ever-nearing slavery, disease, and starvation. What can be done?

First—this can be done. That no man who calls himself a Christian—no man who calls himself a man—shall ever disgrace himself by dealing at any show-shop or slop-shop. It is easy enough to know them. The ticketed garments, the impudent puffs, the trumpery decorations, proclaim them—every one knows them at first sight. He who pretends not to do so, is simply either a fool or a liar. Let no man enter them—they are the temples of Moloch—their thresholds are rank with human blood. God's curse is on them, and on those who, by supporting them, are partakers of their sins. Above all, let no clergyman deal at them. Poverty—and many clergymen are poor—doubly poor, because society often requires them to keep up the dress of gentlemen on the income of an artizan; because, too, the demands on their charity are quadruple those of any other class—yet poverty is no excuse. The thing is damnable—not Christianity only, but common humanity cries out against it. Woe to those who dare to outrage in private the principles which they preach in public! God is not mocked; and his curse will find out the priest at the altar, as well as the nobleman in his castle.

But it is so hard to deprive the public of the luxury of cheap clothes! Then let the public look out for some other means of procuring that priceless blessing. If that, on experiment, be found impossible—if the comfort of the few be for ever to be bought by the misery of the many—if civilization is to benefit every one except the producing class—then this world is truly the devil's world, and the sooner so ill-constructed and infernal a machine is destroyed by that personage the better.

But let, secondly, a dozen, or fifty, or a hundred journeymen say to one another: "It is competition that is ruining us, and competition is division, disunion, every man for himself, every man against his brother. The remedy must be in association, co-operation, self-sacrifice for the sake of one another. We can work together at the honourable tailor's workshop—we can work and live together in the sweater's den for the profit of our employers; why should

we not work and live together in our own workshops, or our own homes, for our own profit? The journeymen of the honourable trade are just as much interested as the slop-workers in putting down sweaters and slop-sellers, since their numbers are constantly decreasing, so that their turn must come some day. Let them, if no one else does, lend money to allow us to set up a workshop of our own, a shop of our own. If the money be not lent, still let us stint and strain ourselves to the very bone, if it were only to raise one sweater's security-money, which one of us should pay into the slop-seller's hands, in his own name, but on behalf of all; that will at least save one sweater's profit out of our labour, and bestow it upon ourselves; and we will not spend that profit, but hoard it, till we have squeezed out all the sweaters one by one. Then we will open our common shop, and sell at as low a price as the cheapest of the show-shops. We *can* do this—by the abolition of sweater's profits—by the using, as far as possible, of one set of fires, lights, rooms, kitchens, and washhouses—above all, by being true and faithful to one another, as all partners should be. And, then, all that the master slop-sellers had better do, will be simply to vanish and become extinct."

And again, let one man, or half-a-dozen men arise, who believe that the world is not the devil's world at all, but God's; that the multitude of the people is not, as Malthusians aver, the ruin, but as Solomon believed, "the strength of the rulers;" that men are not meant to be beasts of prey, eating one another up by competition, as in some confined pike-pond, where the great pike having dispatched the little ones, begin to devour each other, till one overgrown monster is left alone to die of starvation—Let a few men who have money, and believe that, arise to play the man.

Let them help and foster the growth of association by all means. Let them advise the honourable tailors, while it is time, to save themselves from being degraded into slop-sellers by admitting their journeymen to a share in profits. Let them encourage the journeymen to compete with Nebuchadnezzar and Co. at their own game. Let them tell those journeymen that the experiment is even now being tried, and, in many instances successfully, by no less than one hundred and four associations of journeymen in Paris. Let them remind them of that Great Name which the Parisian "ouvrier" so often forgets—of Him whose everlasting Fatherhood is the sole ground of all human brotherhood, whose wise and loving will is the sole source of all perfect order and goverment. Let them, as soon as an association is formed, provide for them a properly ventilated workshop, and let it out to the associate tailors at a low, fair rent. I believe that they will not lose by it—because it is right. God will take care of their money. The world, it comes out now, is so well ordered by Him, that model lodging-houses,

public baths, wash-houses, insurance offices, all pay a reasonable profit to those who invest money in them—perhaps associate workshops may do the same. At all events, the owners of these show-shops realize a far higher profit than need be, while the buildings required for a tailoring establishment are surely not more costly than those absurd plate-glass fronts, and brass scroll-work chandeliars, and puffs, and paid poets. A large house might thus be taken, in some central situation, the upper floors of which might be fitted up as model lodging-rooms for the tailor's trade alone. The drawing-room floor might be the work-room; on the ground-floor the shop; and if possible a room of call or registration office for unemployed journeymen, and a reading-room. Why should not this succeed, if the owners of the house and the workers who rent it are only true to one another? Every tyro in political economy knows that association involves a saving both of labour and of capital. Why should it not succeed, when every one connected with the establishment, landlords and workmen, will have an interest in increasing its prosperity, and none whatever in lowering the wages of any party employed?

But above all, so soon as these men are found working together for common profit, in the spirit of mutual self-sacrifice, let every gentleman and every Christian, who has ever dealt with, or could ever have dealt with, Nebuchadnezzar and Co., or their fellows, make it a point of honour and conscience to deal with the associated workmen, and get others to do the like. *It is by securing custom, far more than by gifts or loans of money, that we can help the operatives.* We should but hang a useless burthen of debt round their necks by advancing capital, without affording them the means of disposing of their produce.

Be assured, that the finding of a tailors' model lodging-house, work-rooms, and shop, and the letting out of the two latter to an association, would be a righteous act to do. If the plan does not pay, what then? only a part of the money can be lost; and to have given that to a hospital or an almshouse would have been called praiseworthy and Christian charity; how much more to have spent it, not in the cure, but in the prevention of evil—in making almshouses less needful, and lessening the number of candidates for the hospital!

Regulations as to police, order, and temperance, the workmen must, and, if they are worthy of the name of free men, they can organize for themselves. Let them remember that an association of labour is very different from an association of capital. The capitalist only embarks his money on the venture; the workman embarks his time—that is, much at least of, his life. Still more different is the operatives' association from the single capitalist, seeking only to realize a rapid fortune, and then withdraw. The

association knows no withdrawal from business; it must grow in length and in breadth, outlasting rival slop-sellers, swallowing up all associations similar to itself, and which might end by competing with it. "Monopoly!" cries a free-trader, with hair on end. Not so, good friend; there will be no real free trade without association. Who tells you that tailors' associations are to be the only ones?

Some such thing, as I have hinted, might surely be done. Where there is a will, there is a way. No doubt there are difficulties—Howard and Elizabeth Fry, too, had their difficulties. Brindley and Brunel did not succeed at their first trial. It is the sluggard only who is always crying, "There is a lion in the streets." Be daring—trust in God, and he will fight for you; man of money, whom these words have touched, godliness has the promise of this life, as well as of that to come. The thing must be done, and speedily; for if it be not done by fair means, it will surely do itself by foul. The continual struggle of competition, not only in the tailors' trade, but in every one which is not, like the navigator's or engineer's, at a premium from its novel and extraordinary demand, will weaken and undermine more and more the masters, who are already many of them speculating on borrowed capital, while it will depress the workmen to a point at which life will become utterly intolerable; increasing education will serve only to make them the more conscious of their own misery; the boiler will be strained to bursting pitch, till some jar, some slight crisis, suddenly directs the imprisoned forces to one point, and then—

What then?

Look at France and see.

PARSON LOT.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

SINCE the above pages were written, crowded meetings, as we hear, have taken place at Exeter Hall, and at the Hall of Commerce, to denounce the evils of the slop-selling system. But the idea of association among the journeymen, forbidden to produce itself—*expressly* forbidden, so we are told—at these grand meetings, was obliged to take refuge in the theatre of the Mechanics' Institute, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, and there to put forth resolutions to the following effect:—

1. "That individual selfishness, as embodied in the competitive system, lies at the root of the evils under which English industry now suffers. That in the tailoring trade in particular, competition among the masters has introduced the practice of giving out piece-work to be done at home, out of which has grown the slop-trade, with all its horrors, and that competition among the journeymen has abetted the exactions of the slop-seller, by calling forth the class of 'sweaters,' or middlemen,—those deadly parasites of labour."

2. "That the remedy for the evils of competition lies in the brotherly and Christian principle of co-operation—that is, of joint work with shared or common profits; and that this principle might be widely and readily applied in the formation of 'Tailors' Working Associations.'"

3. "That the existence of working associations in other trades, co-operating with similar institutions in our own, would, by an interchange of produce, and a consequent increased consumption on the part of the working-classes, open a vast and almost new home market for the productions of English industry. And that this meeting pledges itself to support all such attempts to free the people from the evils of individual competition."

At this meeting, we hear, the public were also informed that a Working Tailors' Association was actually formed in London, ready to wage internecine war with Nebuchadnezzar and Co.; that it had taken in Castle Street, Oxford Street, a house, with workshops capable of holding 200 journeymen. Thither, please God, we intend to go and see them at work, and, in the meantime, we entreat all Christian men to be there before us, and having pondered the contents of the following letter from these working-men, add the weight of their custom, their character, their prayers, to this, the shrewdest blow, as it seems to us, yet aimed at Mammon in our land.

Feb., 1850.

THE WORKING TAILORS' ASSOCIATION.

34, Castle-street, Oxford-street.

SIR,—A few journeymen tailors, anxious to rescue themselves and their class from the miseries and degradation consequent on unlimited competition, and from the abuse of the powers of capital, as lately exhibited to the public by the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper, in its letters on "Labour and the Poor," have resolved to seek a remedy in their own exertions, rather than in any parliamentary enactment, and in some system which shall combine their own interest with the interests of other classes of society, rather than in that return to old customs now chiefly advocated in the trade; by which the benefit of the master and journeyman (but especially of the former,) is sought to be realized at the expense of the consumer.

They have, therefore, united together on the co-operative principle, possessing first-rate talents in the cutting and working department, and being supplied by some clergymen and others with sufficient capital, (which they are anxious to pay back on the first opportunity,) they have commenced business on extensive premises in CASTLE STREET, OXFORD STREET, to which, and to the accompanying list of prices, your attention is respectfully invited. It will be seen from this latter, that they are at once able to compete with the Slop-seller, whilst realizing a fair profit themselves. They are mutually bound to devote one-third of their net profits to the extension of their numbers. It now rests with the public to stamp their experiment with success by favouring them with a liberal measure of custom, and thereby demonstrate, on an ever widening scale, that health, prosperity, and moral worth can be secured to the operative, and cheapness guaranteed to the consumer, by the faithful realization of the brotherly and Christian principle of co-operation. They wish not to injure the trade of any truly "honourable" employer, and venture to hope that all who feel that custom itself ought to have its morality, and who are willing to do what in them lies toward dealing fairly by the operative, will help them by their sympathy, and, as far as possible, by their orders.

I am, Sir,
On the part of the Association,
Your obedient Servant,
WALTER COOPER.

Feb. 1850.

[The following circular has just been issued:—

THE WORKING TAILORS' ASSOCIATION.

34, Castle Street East, Oxford Street.

Sir,—A year has gone by since the Working Tailors' Association began business, and they feel bound to offer thanks to their Customers, and to the Public, for the support they have received. The first established amongst the Associations of Working Men, they have yielded certainly to none in success; they have carried on a business of upwards of £4,000; they have repaid a portion of the capital advanced to them, and hope to repay the whole before long.

They have been enabled to maintain themselves in honourable comfort through their own exertions; they have set an example and afforded friendly help to several provincial Associations of their trade. United henceforth, as they trust, more firmly than ever, they hope if adequately supported, to open before long their doors to a larger number of their suffering fellow workers.

The principle of Co-operative Association is now before the world, and has been noticed far and wide by the press. Others may discuss that principle; it is at present the privilege of working-men to act upon it, and to show if they can in practice that it is a true and a Christian one —one favourable alike to the consumer and the producer, and tending, even when carried out on the smallest scale, to spread well-being through society at large; and their twelve months' experience of it now warrants them in reckoning more confidently than ever before, that all who feel that custom itself has its morality, and who are willing to do what in them lies towards dealing fairly by the operative, will help them by their sympathies, and, as far as possible, by their orders.

The annexed list of prices will show that in seeking the welfare of the journeyman they make no monopoly profits.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
WALTER COOPER.

List of Prices.

		£	s.	d.
Frock Coats, good West of England Cloth - -	from	2	5	0
Best Superfine ditto, with Silk Skirt Linings -		3	18	0
Dress Coats, Superfine - - - -	from	2	0	0
Best Superfine - - - - -		3	12	0
Dress Trowsers, Superfine - - - -	from	1	1	0
Best ditto - - - -		1	12	0
Dress Vest, Superfine - - - -	from	0	12	0
Best ditto - - - -		0	16	0
Llama and Beaver Paletots - - - -	from	2	0	0
Suit of Livery - - - - -	from	3	15	0

May, 1851.]

Just Published, price 1*d.; or* 6*s. a hundred,*

TRACTS ON CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM,

No. I.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN SOMEBODY (A PERSON OF RESPECTABILITY) AND NOBODY (THE WRITER).

No. II.

HISTORY OF THE WORKING TAILORS' ASSOCIATION, 34, Castle Street, Oxford Street.

No. III.

WHAT CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM HAS TO DO WITH THE QUESTION AT PRESENT AGITATING THE CHURCH.

Price Twopence; or Twelve Shillings per Hundred.

No. IV.

THE WORKING ASSOCIATIONS OF PARIS.

No. V.

THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS.

Price 1*d., or* 6*s. a hundred.*

No. VI.

PREVAILING IDOLATRIES; OR HINTS FOR POLITICAL ECONOMISTS.

No. VII.

THE DOCTRINE OF CIRCUMSTANCES AS IT AFFECTS PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

GEORGE BELL, 186, FLEET STREET.

These Tracts may be procured at all the Associations and at the Central Office.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS.

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I. Series on English History, by a Clergyman. No. 1. Price 1*d.*

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Also the following Lectures delivered at the Office of the Society:—

REASONS FOR CO-OPERATION; a Lecture.—To which is added GOD AND MAMMON; a Sermon to Young Men, by The Rev. F. D. Maurice, M. A., Chaplain of Lincoln's Inn. Price 9*d.*

ON THE REFORMATION OF SOCIETY, and how all parties may contribute to it; a Lecture on the opening of the Southampton Working Tailors' Association, by The Rev. F. D. Maurice, M.A., President of the Society. Price 9*d.*

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM AND ITS OPPONENTS, a Lecture by J. M. Ludlow, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister-at-Law. Price 1*s.* 6*d.*

JOHN TUPLING, PUBLISHER, 320, STRAND.

THE ADDRESSES OF THE ASSOCIATIONS

Already in business, are as follows:

WORKING TAILORS' ASSOCIATION, 34, Castle Street, Oxford Street.

NORTH LONDON NEEDLEWOMEN'S ASSOCIATION, 31, Red Lion Square.

WORKING SHOEMAKERS' ASSOCIATIONS:—

Ladies' and Gentlemen's Boot and Shoe Makers, 11B, Tottenham Court Road.

Gentlemen's Boot and Shoe, and Strong Shoe Makers, 151, High Holborn; *Branch*, 5, Church Street, Chelsea.—67, Oakley Street, Lambeth.

WORKING PRINTERS' ASSOCIATION, 4a, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street.

WORKING BAKERS' ASSOCIATION, 26, Clipstone Street, Fitzroy Square.

WORKING BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION, 4, All Saint's Place, Caledonian Road.

PIMLICO WORKING BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION, Tachbrook-street, Warwick Street, Vauxhall Bridge Road.

LONDON CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE AGENCY, 76, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square.

Provincial Association.

SOUTHAMPTON WORKING TAILORS' ASSOCIATION, 18, Bernard Street, Southampton. (Provisionally admitted.)

CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS, 76, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, where all applications should be made and to which it is requested that all information be sent.

Working Printers' Association, 4a, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street.

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TRACTS BY CHRISTIAN SOCIALISTS.

III.

"LABOUR AND THE POOR." PART I.

(Reprinted, with a few alterations, from Fraser's Magazine, *for January,* 1850.*)*

THERE are few, even among those whom outward circumstances or an inward sense of duty has led more or less to associate with, or at least to inquire into the condition of the working-classes of this country, who can have been otherwise than startled with the revelations of the *Morning Chronicle* on the subject of "Labour and the Poor;" startled especially to find how closely particular details tallied with the results of their own experience, and, therefore, how great must be the average truthfulness of the whole picture; startled above all things to see how purblind and stunted their own experience had been, in leading them so little from the particular to the general, from the effect to the cause; from this or that "case of distress," to the social disease whereof it was but an individual symptom, which might be quelled, and yet leave the evil wholly unabated. From many a lip and heart again the cry will have burst forth, What has the Church been doing with her clergy and district-visitors; the local authorities, with their boards of guardians, relieving-officers, and other appliances of secular help to the distressed; the State, with its functionaries and commissioners; private societies, with their numberless devices of machine-made charity; statists with their figures; economists with their theories; ay, every one of us with our eyes, and ears, and hearts, what have *we* been doing that such things yet should be,—that a newspaper should be required to tell us of them?

Never before, certainly, on so great a scale was this great and vital branch of the Condition-of-England question exhibited to us with such completeness and in such relief. It is not so much that many absolutely new facts have been discovered; that many grains of truth have been sifted out, which did not lie buried ere this in the dust-heaps of parliamentary blue-books and reports of societies; it is that the light-flood of publicity has shown these facts in their number, in their coherence, and their sequency; it is that the scattered grains of truth, like the iron filings from the mingled rubbish, have been drawn out by the magnet of a steady purpose, and lie there to our hand, ready to be welded into some mighty engine either of death or of life, according as we choose to make use of

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them, for purposes of mutual insult and hatred, or God-fearing fellowship, labour, and love. And each member of the series bears its own distinctive character, points its own moral, reveals a special class of evils and of wrongs, suggests special remedies. The tale of the Rural Districts is cheerless above all the rest. It shows to us the whole mass of the agricultural labourers—in the south-western counties first, and now in the east-midland counties—living not like men but beasts; stinted in their wages, starved of decent house-room, stunted in all their faculties of affection and of knowledge, uncared-for, vicious, degraded; sullen and hateful, as a brute half tamed by hunger and fear. And the one cause for all this evil lies in the neglect of the duties of property. Wherever a landlord chooses to exert himself for the benefit of his tenantry, or seemingly only to allow them to exert themselves; wherever a farmer treats his labourers on a par with his cattle, and finds them in keep when he does not find them in work,—a gleam of sunshine lights at once upon the picture; decency returns to the labourer's cottage, thrifty gardens supply the place of the filthy muck-heap, and the clergyman feels he has no longer to contend, as elsewhere, alone in sheer blank hopelessness, against universal dishonesty, vice, and beastliness. Up to this hour the landlords have the game in their own hands; they have but to will it, and the English peasant may, in a generation or two, be the honour of this country instead of its shame.

The Manufacturing Districts again present, on the whole, the most pleasing side of the picture. It is impossible to peruse this series, and not to observe that under two separate conditions manufacturing industry is decidedly conducive to the welfare of the people employed in it. On the one hand, while as yet machinery has not outgrown domestic use; when, for instance, the loom, through its various processes, affords employment for all the members of the household, and becomes thus a very centre of family life; thus the condition of the Saddleworth cloth-weaver is equal, and, in some respects, superior to that of the yeoman or small landowner under its best aspect, inasmuch as he has all his children at work under his own eye, and can frequently afford the wholesome luxury of a garden, or the bracing enjoyment of field-sports. Again, when loom and jenny have learnt to cluster round the steam-engine, and the operatives have become massed in little armies under the factory-roof, their very numbers and the discipline which machinery always brings with it afford many more appliances of good than of evil. Even though the manufacturer, raised into a real labour-lord, should, like the landlord, neglect his duty towards the tenants of his workshop, screw profits out of wages, and cut "hands" adrift on the slightest sign of commercial depression, still the operative is not lonely and helpless as the agricultural labourer. Collective remonstrances can be urged, the combination

of numbers can be opposed to that of capital, may be used for purposes of mutual relief, encouragement, instruction; whilst the large scale on which the operations of manufactures take place renders more public every deed of tyranny or of wise benevolence, and affords the check of opinion upon the acts of the masters. And where, indeed, the labour-lord does understand his duty, the bonds of union between master and workman, between man and man, can be drawn far tighter than amongst an agricultural population (as at present constituted); all improvements in the condition of the working-classes, whether material, intellectual, or moral, can be introduced on the largest scale, and a whole factory may become one living body, animated with one spirit of mutual good-will and zeal. This is especially the case in some of the rural factories. It is true that we have here but examples of "enlightened despotism;" the constitutional guarantees of the operative have yet to be settled, his Bill of Rights lies yet unwritten. For the special evils of the system, such as the drugging of children, arising from the demand for female labour in the factories, special remedies must be devised; such as the establishment of those public nurseries, or *crèches*, which have taken deep root in France, and which might, by law, be annexed like schools to every factory. The *crèche*, it may be shortly stated, is an establishment where infants are kept during the day (by Sisters of Charity, for instance), and delivered back at night to the mother, who comes as often as necessary during the day to give the breast. Cradles are provided and a play-room, with food to be given by hand in case of need. The objection to the indiscriminate use of this plan, that it tends to the neglect of motherly duty, is surely quite out of place in the manufacturing towns, where it is shown to be the habitual practice of mothers to leave their children to old women or young girls, who drug them with opiates; especially if the *crèche*, as suggested, be annexed to the factory itself. I venture to say that such establishments, if properly directed, would put a complete check upon the wholesale poisoning of children which is proved to take place, and would to a great extent, renovate the health of the population.*

I shall not dwell here at length upon the letters of the Manufacturing series. Nor shall I insist upon the letters from the Rural Districts, although the subject of them is one less known and more awful. Awfully, indeed, do they confirm those gloomy pictures drawn of the English peasant by the author of "Yeast," pictures of which so many hitherto doubted the literal accuracy. Both series only serve to bring out the truth which the Metropolitan series exhibits in the most glaring colours, with the most startling effect; that everywhere throughout England a force is at work which bears

* Since the above was written, Public Nurseries have been established, both in London (Nassau Street, Fitzroy Square), and in Manchester, and the plan of annexing them by law to factories is being agitated in Lancashire.

down the wages of the operative with the profits of the capitalist, until the profits swallow up the wages, and vice or crime makes up the maintenance of the defrauded workman. On this picture let us now dwell.

The transition is complete, from the compulsory socialism of the Manufacturing Districts, to the reigning individualism of the Metropolis: from the gregarious factory-hands to the solitary shirt-makers. London seems emphatically the city of unsocialized labour. From the great slop-seller to the poor slop-worker in her garret, there is a chasm of indifference and selfishness wider almost than that which separates the clod from the most careless landlord. Less labour-lords than mere money-lords, the employers for the most part have not the slightest connexion with the employed, beyond the giving out work and paying for it, generally with cruel deductions. Men of a low stamp of character (with a few bright exceptions such as Mr. Shaw, the army-clothier), they are wholly absorbed in money-getting, and, from their position and feelings, are often as much beneath the control of public opinion as the landlord or cotton-lord sometimes fancies himself above it. The consequences are, an extreme of misery such as cannot be paralleled elsewhere; and yet, interwoven with that misery, golden threads of heroism and virtue, which show that the largest cities bear the mark of God's hand as well as the most lovely landscapes; nay, that there only, perhaps, man reaches the very sublimity of wretchedness—the suffering alone in a crowd. Even the blacker warp of vice itself, crossed with that crimson weft of anguish, becomes less hateful to the eye. We turn with shrinking and disgust from Wiltshire or Dorsetshire labourers, pigging their life-long by dozens in one room, children and adults, blood-relations and strangers, their senses dulled to incest itself; we scarcely dare turn with unmoistened eyes from the story of the maddened mother prostituting herself for her child's bread; of the young girls forced to eke out wages by prostitution, for the dear life's sake, and yet loathing it in their hearts, flying from it on the first opportunity. Or again, we pity the Suffolk labourer stealing a few turnips for the sustenance of his family; we look with almost admiration on the smooth-handed London pickpocket competing, and often in vain, for the rough but honest labour of the Docks. And nobler examples even than these can yet be set forth, from those precious records of the long-suffering and patience of the London poor, of their manly struggles for honest labour.

Strange and sad, indeed, are the pictures which these Metropolitan letters exhibit, drawn from God's own storehouse of Fact,—stranger, sadder, terribler than all fiction. Look at the Spitalfields weavers, "formerly the only botanists in the metropolis," possessing, within the memory of living man, an Entomological Society, a Horticultural Society, an Historical Society, and a Mathematical

Society, all maintained by the operatives, — bringing forth a Dollond, a Simpson, and an Edwards; and then, in the course of this very half century, seeing their wages cut away from them year after year, falling from 14*s.* 6*d.* (average) in 1824 to 7*s.* in 1839, and to 5*s.* 6*d.* in 1849; till the second or third-rate weavers are found living twenty-three persons in a house; tasting sometimes animal food once a-month, while they produce maroon-coloured velvets "for ladies to wear and adorn them, and make themselves handsome." Look at the three-thousand labourers scuffling every morning at the London Dock-gates for a single day's hire of half-a-crown, and if failing of admission still waiting in the yards by the day long, on the chance of earning 4*d.* an hour if wanted for some stray ship,—the average earnings of the whole class not exceeding 5*s.* per week throughout the year; whilst an easterly wind will throw 7000 out of employ, or, with their dependents, 20,000! Look at the slop-work tailors, the men receiving 3*s.* 6*d.* for the coats they made at 5*s.* 1*d.* two years ago, — sometimes eating, drinking, sleeping, working in one room, as many as ever the room will contain; the women earning at the best from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* per week, let them sit from eight in the morning till ten at night, and paying out of that 1*s.* 6*d.* for trimmings and 6*d.* candles every week, so that altogether they earn about 3*s.* in the six days,—hopeless creatures, that "never knew a rise, but continual reductions!" Look at the shirt-maker, making shirts for 2*s.* a dozen that were 3*s.* 6*d.* eight years ago: her usual time of work "from five in the morning till nine at night, winter and summer;" when there is a press of business getting up often at two or three in the morning, and "carrying on" till the evening of the following day, merely lying down in her clothes to take a nap of five or ten minutes, for "the agitation of mind never lets one lie longer;" and for all this toil earning on an average 2*s.* 10*d*¾. per week, or 2*s.* clear, after deducting cotton and candle,—a hopeless creature, too, that "never knew them to raise the prices!" Look at the waist-coat maker,—her average earning from 3*s.* to 4*s.* a-week, out of which, all deductions made, she has about 1*s.* 10¾*d.* to live upon: she, too, one who has found "prices continually going down," and "never knew an advance," and yet knows persons "who get even lower prices than she does; oh, yes, a great deal lower!" Look at the workers for the army-clothiers,—the one working for the soldiers and marines, and receiving 8*d.* for jackets that fourteen years ago used to be 1*s.* 4*d.*, for, "you know they lower them always," earning 2*s.* a-week on an average, and finding her own thread; the other, working for the convicts, earning 3*s.* a-week when in full work, and having to deduct thread and candles, "which is quite half;" whilst of the trousers-stitcher "the most she ever earned was 2*s.* a-week, and that her girl helped her to a good bit!" By the side of such misery the stay-sticher seems almost wealthy with her average of

2*s.* 6*d.* a-week clear, deducting candles, and yet, she, too, tells her tale of falling wages: thirty years ago she had made as much as 17*s.* 5*d.* for her week's work, and now the most she can make is 3*s.* 6*d.* But the shoe-binder, again, "generally works about eighteen hours a-day," and makes about eight pair of boots, "for getting them out and taking them in all takes time;" and eight pairs of boots at 2¼*d.* clear bring in 1*s.* 6*d.* a-week, out of which she has to pay candles, and they come to 6*d.* a-week, leaving ONE SHILLING CLEAR; and here, too, the prices were much better twelve or thirteen years ago. "The best 'lasting' boots were 1*s.* 6*d.* and some 2*s.* then; now I should get 5*d.* and 7*d.* for the same kind of work." If the stock-maker, employing a "hand" and a little girl, can clear about 5*s.* a-week, her tale of falling wages opens as dire a prospect for the future. She remembers "the prices of the Napiers being 8*s.* 6*d.* a dozen, they're 3*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* now." The prices have fallen considerably more than one-half within this last year and a half. The mantle-maker sits upon an average at her work from nine in the morning till eleven at night—"often longer, seldom less," and makes about 4*s.* 8*d.* a-week when in work, the "slacks" occurring twice in the year, and being of three months each. The upholsterer may earn in a week from 10*s.* to 12*s.*; but the fluctuations of the trade are so great that "for the last two years she has not earned 4*s.* a-week, taking one week with another," while "the prices paid to the work-people have decreased materially within the last five years, to the extent of one-half in bed-furniture." The worker in furs repeats the same tale of falling wages. "The prices have fallen a great deal within the last five years. Every year it gets worse and worse. The prices have come down fully a shilling a dozen since 1845. We could then earn with the same labour 12*s.* where we now earn 8*s.*" And the result of the whole is, that for eight months in the year she may earn 8*s.*, while for the other four she does not get more than 2*s.* a-week upon an average. The embroiderer gets 1*s.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* the dress, what she used to have 5*s.* and 6*s.* for, and more than that. "Why they are paying now 2*s.* 6*d.* for cardinals that I've had 16*s.* for." She can earn 12*s.* a-week on twelve hours' work a-day; but her weekly earnings "for the whole of this year haven't been more than 2*s.*, take one week with another; and three years ago she used to make 15*s.* to 16*s.* a-week regular, and that with perfect ease." The garter-maker works from eight in the morning till nine at night, to earn about 4*s.* a-week clear; she has always worked at the same prices, but "they told her the last time she was at the warehouse that she must do the work for something cheaper, they were obliged to sell so low." The brace-maker,—and here again we are stooping over almost incredible depths of misery,—earns "about 1*s.* to 1*s.* 3½*d.* every week, working six days of twelve hours, and finding cotton and candle, and has three months' slack in the year, during which she gets

about 4½*d.* every week, paying a half-penny worth of cotton. The prices fell the summer before last last from 3½*d.* a dozen to 3*d.*, from 6*d.* to 5*d.* Of course the poor creatures who are reduced thus far cannot live by their own exertions. The husband of the woman last spoken of is a hawker of groundsel, making from 4*s.* to 5*s.* a-week in the summer, and from 3*s.* to 4*s.* in the winter; and he, too, used to get 1*d.* nine or ten years ago for the same bunches which he now sells for ½*d.*

But what do they do who have no husbands or lovers—for concubinage is, of course, frequent—to eke out their earnings, or who have burdens to provide for? Listen:—

I make moleskin trousers. I get 7*d.* and 8*d.* per pair. I can do two pairs in a day, and twelve, when there is full employment, in a week. But some weeks I have no work at all. I work from six in the morning to ten at night; that is what I call my day's work. When I am fully employed I get from 7*s.* to 8*s.* a-week. My expenses out of that for twist, thread, and candles, are about 1*s.* 6*d.* a-week, leaving me about 6*s.* a-week clear. But there's coals to pay for out of this, and that's at least 6*d.* more; so 5*s.* 6*d.* is the very outside of what I earn when I am in full work. . . . Taking one week with another, all the year round, I don't make above 3*s.* clear money each week. . . The trousers-work is held to be the best paid of all. . . . . My father died when I was five years of age. My mother is a widow, upwards of sixty-six years of age, and seldom has a day's work. Generally once in the week she is employed in pot-scouring; that is, cleaning publicans' pots. She is paid 4*d.* a dozen for that, and does about four dozen and a-half, so that she gets about 1*s.* 6*d.* in the day by it. For the rest she is dependent upon me. . . . We can earn together, to keep the two of us, from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* each week. Out of this we have to pay 1*s.* rent, and there remains 3*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* to find us both in food and clothing. *It is, of course, impossible for us to live upon it, and the consequence is I am obligated to go a bad way. . . . I was virtuous when I first went to work, and I remained so till this last twelvemonth. I struggled very hard to keep myself chaste, but I found that I couldn't get food and clothing for myself and mother, so I took to live with a young man.* . . . Many young girls at the shop advised me to go wrong. They told me how comfortable they was off; they said they could get plenty to eat and drink and good clothes. There isn't one young girl as can get her living by slop-work. . . It stands to reason that no one can live and pay rent and find clothes upon 3*s.* a-week. . . . I am satisfied there is not one young girl that works at slop-work that is virtuous, and there are some thousands in the trade. . . . *I've heard of numbers who have gone from slop-work to the streets altogether for a living, and I shall be obligated to do the same thing* myself unless something better turns up for me. If I was never to speak no more, it was the little money I got by my labour that led me to go wrong. . . . *I know how horrible all this is.* It would have been much better for me to have subsisted upon a dry crust and water rather than be as I am now. . . . *Young as I am my life is a curse to me. If the Almighty would take me before my child is born, I should die happy.*

Listen again :—

I'm a trousers hand. . . . It takes from five to six hours to make a pair of the trousers that we gets 4*d.* for, and work very quick. We must work from twelve to fourteen hours every day to make two pair,—that is, allowing a little time to one's meals; and then we have to sweep and tidy our place up a little, so that we must work very hard to get two pair done in a day. . . . We never make more than 4*s.*, and very often less. . . . I make, I should say, taking one week with another, about 3*s.* 4*d.* a-week. . . . . We has to buy our candles out of what we make, and they cost us about 1*d.* each evening, or I should say 5*d.* a-week. I earn clear just upon 3*s.* . . . My husband has been dead some years. . . . I had two children alive when my husband died. . . . My security died five year ago, and then the house that I use to work for refused to give me any more, so I was obligated to go and work for a sweater, and I have done so ever since. . . . I was getting about 5*s.* 6*d.* a-week before then. . . . When I was obligated to work second-handed I couldn't get more than 4*s.* One of my boys was alive at this time, and we really could not live upon the money. I applied to the parish, and they wanted me to go into the house, but I knew if I did they'd take my boy from me, and I'd suffer anything first. *At times I was so badly off, me and my boy, that I was forced to resort to prostitution to keep us from starving.* . . . Up to the time of the death of my security I can swear before God I was an honest woman; and had the price I was paid for my labour been such that I could get a living by it, I would never have resorted to the streets for money. . . . *Almost all that works for the sweaters do the same thing. I know several that's very young living in that manner.* It most drives 'em mad. They're hard-working industrious people, but they don't get sufficient price to have enough,—no, not even of the coarsest victuals; and if they got more they wouldn't think of such a mode of life. They do their work in the day, and go out in the night. . . . In this way they make their week's money come to about 6*s.* or 7*s.* . . . *I don't know any that makes a practice of walking the streets regularly of a night.* THEY ONLY GO OUT WHEN THEY'RE IN DISTRESS.

Listen again to another trousers' hand, working at the same place and for the same prices :—

I was an honest woman up to the time of my husband's death. But since then the world has drove me about so, and poverty and trouble has forced me to do what I never did before. . . . *I do the best I can with what little I earn, and the rest I am obligated to go to the streets for.* . . . I CAN'T GET A RAG TO WEAR WITHOUT FLYING TO PROSTITUTION FOR IT. . . . IF I WAS YOUNGER I SHOULD GO ON THE STREETS ALTOGETHER MYSELF. I OFTEN DO SAY I WISH I WAS YOUNGER.

Listen still :—

I used to work at slop-work—at the shirt-work—the full-fronted white shirts: I got 2¼*d.* each for them. There was six buttonholes, four rows of stitching in the front, and the collars and wristbands stitched as well. By working from five o'clock in the morning till midnight each night I

might be able to do seven in the week. These would bring me in 17½*d.* for my whole week's labour. Out of this my cotton must be taken, and that came to 2*d.* every week, and so left me 15½*d.* to pay rent and living, and buy candles with. . . . *I had a child, and it used to cry for food. So as I could not get a living for him myself by my needle,* I WENT INTO THE STREETS AND MADE OUT A LIVING THAT WAY. *Sometimes there was no work for me,* AND THEN I WAS FORCED TO DEPEND ENTIRELY UPON THE STREETS FOR MY FOOD. ON MY SOUL, I WENT TO THE STREETS SOLELY TO GET A LIVING FOR MYSELF AND CHILD. . . . I am the daughter of a minister of the Gospel. . . . Many times have I taken my child into the streets to beg rather than I would bring shame upon myself and it any longer. . . . One night in the depth of winter his legs froze to my side. . . . I got to the workhouse that night. I told them we were starving, but they refused to admit us without an order ; so I WENT BACK TO PROSTITUTION AGAIN FOR ANOTHER MONTH. . . . I can and will solemnly state, that it was the smallness of the price I got for my labour that drove me to prostitution as a means of living. In my heart I hated it ; my whole nature rebelled at it ; and nobody but God knows how I struggled to give it up. I was only able to do so by getting work at something that was better paid. HAD I REMAINED AT SHIRT-MAKING I MUST HAVE BEEN A PROSTITUTE TO THIS DAY. I have taken my gown off my back and pledged it, and gave in my petticoat—I had but one—rather than take to the streets again ; but it was all in vain. I NEVER KNEW ONE GIRL IN THE TRADE WHO WAS VIRTUOUS ; MOST OF THEM WISHED TO BE SO, BUT WERE COMPELLED TO BE OTHERWISE FOR MERE LIFE.

Again and again the same tale recurs :—

I am a slop-worker, and sometimes make about 3*s.* 6*d.* a-week, and sometimes less. *I have been drove to prostitution sometimes, not always, through the bad prices.* For the sake of my lodgings and a bit of bread I've been obligated to do what I am very sorry to do, and look upon with disgust. I can't live by what I get by work.

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I've been out in the streets three years. I work at the boot-binding, but can't get a living at it. . . . If I get bread, sir, by my work, I can't get clothes. For the sake of clothes or food I'm obliged to go into the streets, and I'm out reg'larly now, and I've no other dependence at all but the streets. If I could only get an honest living I would gladly leave the streets.

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I have not been on the town these five months since I had work, but I was forced to do so before that. . . . Could I obtain a living by my needle I would never resort to prostitution.

Let those who dare cast the first stone at these poor creatures, *I* will not. And yet the whole depth of iniquity which lies in the slop-work system cannot be probed until we see it at work upon those almost superhuman heroines, whom it can murder but cannot pollute. In the number of the *Morning Chronicle* for Nov. 2, 1849, will be found the account kept during four years of the

earnings of two women, who have worked together seven years,—one a widow of fifty-four, the other a maiden woman of forty-three. These women are "generally employed at a class of work (drawn bonnet making) which is much better paid than either the trousers or shirt-work." And from the account given it will be seen that,

After paying their rent, all these two workwomen had left to purchase food and clothing was, throughout the year 1846, *fourpence-farthing* each per day; throughout the year 1847, *threepence-halfpenny;* throughout the year 1848, TWOPENCE-HALFPENNY; and throughout the present year, TWOPENCE-HALFPENNY also. To get this amount each, it should be remembered that they had to work from eighteen to twenty hours every day, including Sundays. In every year, they told me, there are generally seven months, and at the very least six, that they cannot pay rent, and during the other six months they have to work night and day in order to clear off the back rent. . . . The room is taken furnished. It is a small attic, seven feet square, without any fireplace, and several panes are gone from the windows. There is scarcely any furniture: only one chair. The other party has to sit on the bed. . . . Their landlady is very kind to them, and allows them the occasional use of her fire. They never go into debt for anything but their rent. If they haven't got money they go without—never run credit for anything to eat. If they have anything to pledge, they get their food that way; and if they are quite "up," and have nothing to pledge, "why then," said one of the poor old creatures, smiling, "WE STARVE: YES, WE'RE OBLIGED TO IT. WE'D RATHER DO THAT THAN GO IN DEBT."

God's blessings be upon you, ye noble martyrs of labour, sent into this age of horse-race betters and railway gamblers to show how those words of St. Paul can be fulfilled to the very letter,—"Owe no man anything, but to love one another!" God's blessings be upon you!

If only the food and other necessary articles purchased by such martyrdom were cheap and wholesome! But the reverse is the case. It is shown that amongst the street hucksters, the great purveyors of the poor, the pound-weight of the costermonger, or street vender of vegetables, fruit, and fish,—

Is mostly deficient four ounces, and frequently eight or ten ounces; that the pint measure is at least one-third short; that the fish supplied to them is generally what is called "rough," or, in other words, two or three days' old before it is bought, and frequently putrid when sold by them to the poor; and, moreover, that they almost invariably borrow the capital with which they purchase their goods, and pay interest at the rate of nearly 1000 per cent. for the money.

And if the inquiries of the journalist have not extended to the cheap butchers and bakers, enough is known already on the subject of the quantity and quality of the provisions supplied by these petty tradesmen to show that he tells but the simple universal truth, when he says of the poor, that "if they are underpaid

for what they do, they are at the same time fearfully overcharged for all they buy." Nay, the small quantities which their limited means allow them to purchase create at once, by the additional labour such custom imposes upon the tradesman, an unavoidable ground for overcharge. When coffee is sold in farthingsworth, as it is to the wretched inmates of the lodging-houses near the Docks, how enormous must be the profit, if there is to be any at all!

And what if we take into consideration the house-rent paid by the poor? I do not fear to assert, that rent is paid for single rooms in houses destitute of every convenience, situate in narrow or filthy courts and alleys, at a rate fifty per cent. higher than that of houses in the airy streets and squares of the West end; and how little have the Model Lodging-houses of either society done as yet towards removing this monster evil! Or if, again, we consider the rate of interest at which the poor man borrows, whether from the pawnbroker or the loan society, how great is still the contrast between the working and the moneyed classes! Scarcely a trader on the verge of bankruptcy fails to obtain money at a lower price than the honest artizan is compelled to pay to the pawnbroker in his first difficulties. And yet the questions of house-rent and of loans are such as the correspondents of the *Morning Chronicle* have barely glanced at, however necessary towards filling up the background of their sketches of the condition of the labouring poor.

Still, it may be said, Your accounts apply only to the emphatically underpaid and suffering classes. Starvation wages and unwholesome diet are not the characteristics of the bulk of London workmen. But what if they be the characteristics of a daily-increasing class?—if the fallen condition of the Spitalfields weaver be only the full-developed type of what is everywhere taking place? The inquiry into the state of the operative tailors, nearly five-and-twenty thousand in number, shows that "there are not more than three thousand belonging to what is termed the honourable portion of the trade," whilst there was double the number in 1821. The system of piecework has led to the giving out of work, and thereby to the creation of the class of sweaters or middlemen, who trade upon the labour of others by getting work done—through women and children, for instance—at a cheaper rate than it is paid to them, and one of whom thus makes upwards of 3000*l.* a-year. So that, whilst the poor are getting poorer, the comparatively well-off are either sinking into poverty or becoming the mere parasites of labour, swelling the helplessness or sharpening the tyranny.

Tyranny! yes, for no milder term can be used. What is to be said of fines of 3*d.* the first hour, 6*d.* for every hour afterwards (or *vice versâ*) if the work be not delivered at the exact time? of 1*d.* for "sauciness;" of 3*d.* to 6*d.* for vermin; accumulating till "very often the whole money is stopped," or the workman is brought

in debt at the end of the week—perhaps for refusing to work of a Sunday? (An improvement, truly, on West Indian Slavery. Fools of slave-owners, to feed their slaves while they work them!) Or what is to be said of "security" bakers, chandlers, publicans—not butchers, "because the slop-work people cannot afford to consume much meat"—advancing deposit moneys to the workman, and then selling second-rate articles to him at first-rate prices? Or what of sweaters' wives, lurking in the streets to entrap country or Irish tailors, under promise of constant work and high prices, with cheap board and lodging, and so decoying them to their husbands' houses, where they are sometimes "starved to the bone?" If this be not foulest tyranny, what is?

On the first perusal of such statements the question scarcely arises in any one's mind, Must these things be any longer? so mighty is the inner voice that cries, "THEY MUST NOT BE!" And if any one should so far allow his conscience to be juggled by his intellect, or smothered by his indolent self-love, as to sigh and say, "These evils are necessary ones,—they are the natural results of competition, and competition is the law of human society;" this is what I have to answer,—"If it be necessary in English society that from thirteeen to fourteen thousand females should in London be engaged in slop-work, earning on an average two-pence-halfpenny a-day, of whom one fourth, being those who have no husband or parent to support them, have no choice but between starvation and prostitution,—if this be necessary, I say, in English society, then English society is the devils' own work, and to hell with it as soon as possible!" But if, as I believe it to be, all earthly society is the work of God and not of man,—if it be appointed of God to be, as it were, the reflection and image of the eternal brotherhood of the Church,—if the word "Society" be the very mirror in which that image is glassed, meaning as it does simply and truly Partnership, a condition in which several join their strength together for the good of all, in which no profit can be earned that is not the profit of all, no loss sustained that is not the loss of all, even though the shares should differ in which that profit and that loss are apportioned,—if it be not a "natural law" of that condition, but the very ruin and denial of it, that every partner should seek his own gain at the cost of every other's loss by what is termed competition,—if this be so, I say, then all we have to do, every one of us, is, having once learned of such things, to endeavour to understand them; having understood them, to endeavour to remedy them; and God will help us in so doing if to Him we look for help.

J. T.

☞ *Part II. will be published shortly.*

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TRACTS BY CHRISTIAN SOCIALISTS.

IV.

"LABOUR AND THE POOR." PART II.

(*Reprinted from* Fraser's Magazine *for Jan.*, 1850, *with a few alterations and some further observations.*)

THERE seems really no doubt in any mind as to the cause of the evils exhibited by the *Morning Chronicle* in the state of "Labour and the Poor." Every one says or feels, even if he denies it, that it is competition, whether amongst operatives or employers;—"excessive competition," say some; and we will not quarrel with them for the present about the adjective. But it may be right, nevertheless, to state the opinions of the sufferers themselves.

The Spitalfields weaver, speaking of that "continuation of reduction for the last six-and-twenty years" under which he suffers says:—

> The workmen are obliged to take the low prices, because they have not the means to hold out, and they know that if they don't take the work others will....The masters are all trying to undersell one another. They never will advance wages. "Go get my neighbour to do it," each says, "and then *I'll* advance."....In the work of reduction certain houses take the lead, taking advantage of the least depression to offer the workmen less wages.

And the competition is not that of the foreigner:—

> It's useless talking about French goods. Why, we've driven the French out of the market in umbrellas and parasols; *but the people are starving while they're a-driving of 'em out.* [Others, however, do attribute to the foreigner a share in the evil.] The prices of weaving is so low (says another) that *we're ashamed to say what it is, because it's the means of pulling down other poor men's wages and other trades.*

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Another :—

They've lowered the wages so low, that one would hardly believe the people would take the work. But what's one to do? *The children can't* QUITE *starve.*

The scuffle for a day's hire at the Docks has been already referred to elsewhere. As to slop-work, one of the female hands says :—

I think there are so many to work at it that one will undersell the other. I have seen it so at the shop. The sweaters screw the people down as low as they possibly can, and the masters hear how little they can get their work done for, and cut down the sweaters, and so the work-people have to suffer again.

A shirt-maker says :—

One cause (why they get so little) is the Jews going to those in the trade and making them brag how little they can get the shirts done for. The original cause of the reduction was their being sent to the unions and the prisons to be made.

A stay-stitcher gives a remarkable instance of the beating-down system in the case of a person in the City, who got a number of the poor people to work for him, and made them all put down 5*s.* each before they had a stitch of work. He was hereby enabled to launch and take a large establishment, and had as many as seven hundred persons in his employ working out of doors. He and another man, about twenty-five years ago, were the first to cut down the prices of the workpeople. They sent the work into the country to get it done in the cheapest way they could, and have always been lowering the prices of the poor people.

Another equally striking statement is given by a stock-maker :—

I believe it (the fall in prices) is owing to one hand having no work and going to underbid another. I myself know that one hand offered to work at a less price than I was getting, and that was the cause of my being reduced.—9*d.* first, and then 6*d.* more per dozen in one article that I make....One of the causes of the cheap prices is, the master puts up a bill in his window to say that he wants hands, whether he does or no.* This I believe, is done, not because extra hands are wanted, but that the master may see how many people are out of work, and how cheap he can get his work done. Those that will do it the cheapest and best he employs, and those that won't they may starve—or something worse.

* I have had the same statement myself from a boot-closer, a highly respectable man.

An upholsterer says :—

There is more fluctuation in the upholstery business than in any other in London. It need not to be so; but of late years it has fluctuated extremely, from the competition in the trade. The linen-drapers have taken to supply furniture ready-made. There are many large houses who do a great trade in this way, and they sell at prices that the others cannot compete with.

And prices may be beaten down even by an experiment which is itself a failure. A fur-worker says :—

The hand-embroidery has ruined the frame-embroidery altogether.... The cause of the stock-work falling off was this : A man got a quantity of the girls out of the workhouse, and put a few tidy hands to superintend the business. There was a good deal of laughing and joking about that man, for he was a butcher by trade, and the idea of his starting in the embroidery line tickled every one. He took 'em down to Cambridge Heath, and cut down the prices so low that fifty of us was forced to leave the business at once. The butcher made a failure of it, and the whole establishment was broke up, and that was the ruin of the hand-embroidery. Then there was another cheap hand, the son of a party in the trade; he underminded his father. He went to the warehouses and offered to do the work for less than half-price, and ruined it altogether. I believe he made a failure too.

Even the poor groundsel vendor says of his trade :

There's so many at it now to what there was afore, that it's difficult to get a living, and the ladies are very hard with a body.

The various categories of street huckstering are in like manner subject to competition. The coffee-stall trade is overstocked. "Two of us," to use their own words, "are eating one man's bread." In the watercress line

There's twenty to one to what there used to be. Why, they're so thick down at the market in the summer time, that you might bowl balls along their heads, and all a-fighting for the cresses. There's a regular scramble, I can assure you, to get at 'em, so as to make a halfpenny out of them.

Of the cat's-meat men, or carriers

Some sell much cheaper than the others. They will frequently knock at the doors of persons whom they have seen served by another on the previous day, and show them that they can let them have a larger quantity of meat for the same money....There are so many at the trade, that there is barely a living for any.

And Government, through its contract system, is the most powerful agent in this beating down of prices and of wages. For instance, in the army the off-reckonings, or clothing allowances to colonels, are annual rates borne on the establishment of the regiment, fixed by warrants for the infantry as follows:—

Sergeant	£7	9	2
Corporal	4	19	6
Private	2	6	0
Drummer or Trumpeter	4	19	6

But the annual cost to the colonel is as follows:—

Sergeant	£3	4	9
Corporal	1	17	4
Private	1	16	10
Drummer	2	14	4

The whole difference, amounting to 614*l.* 16*s.* 1*d.* per annum, is the annual profit or emolument derived by each of 105 infantry colonels, who receive thus 64,000*l.* or 25 per cent. out of the 255,000*l.* allowed for the clothing of the infantry. And the system of contract at the lowest tender is carried out as respects the uniforms of the navy, the marines, the police, the pensioners, the custom-house officers, the postmen, the convicts,—not to speak of the railways. Now Mr. Pearse, the army-clothier, says:—

> Amongst the variety of clothiers there prevails a competition to provide clothing as cheap as it is possible to be effectually done....If the competition was not so very severe a higher price would be assuredly charged than at present, as, in point of fact, the price which the clothiers charge is not adequate as compared to the profits of other branches of business.

The results of which are, that the prices paid to the workmen are about half what they should be, *at the lowest living price.* Thus, for instance, for navy jackets 2*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* 8*d.* are paid, the lowest living prices being 5*s.* and 6*s.* For Royal Marine clothing, the private's coat and epaulettes are paid 1*s.* 9*d.*, the lowest living price being 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* The private's coat in the Royal Artillery is paid 1*s.* 7*d.* to 1*s.* 8*d.*, the lowest living price being 3*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* The convict's jacket is paid 3*d.*, the lowest living price being 9*d.* The police blue coat is paid 2*s.* 10*d.*, the lowest living price being 5*s.* to 6*s.*

Again, the Poor-laws are an accessory to these social crimes.

The terror of the workhouse and of family separations acts with especial severity upon those in whom the holy parental instincts are strongest, and forces them back again and again upon starvation wages and prostitution. Remember the statement of the trousers' hand:

> I applied to the parish, and they wanted me to go into the house, but I knew if I did they'd take my boy from me, and I'd suffer anything first. At times I was so badly off, me and my boy, that I was forced to resort to prostitution to keep us from starving.

A slop-shirt maker, whose touching history I have not had space to refer to, tells how she was obliged to get an order to go into the house; "how the children were taken and separated, and then, oh, my God! what I felt no tongue can tell;" how soon she got herself to be discharged upon 1*s.* a-week and two loaves, for the sake of recovering her children (one of whom had died in the workhouse), and then "took to slop-shirts again." And the same tale is repeated by several others. The thought of having their children taken from them is more than they can bear, and the sweater's clutch is riveted on them by a law which professes to be one for "the relief of poor persons!"

How then is the evil to be put down? The first, almost ungovernable, impulse said, "Charity!" and vented itself in the sending of a post-office order, or of a registered sovereign, to the office of the *Morning Chronicle.* God forbid that I should cast one word of reproach upon that impulse; that I should fail to acknowledge with joy the wonderful fact, that a London daily newspaper—a thing of party politics, and daily gossip, and tales of murder and vice, and the mammon worship of the Stock Exchange—should have become at one time a public almoner to the amount of hundreds of pounds; that its whole establishment should have responded gladly to the unwonted call, and loaded themselves with hours and hours of voluntary labour! This is a wonderful fact, I say; a fact to thank God for on our knees at our hours of prayer; a fact which shows what depths of nobleness and kindly feeling there are in the English heart, if any one seeks to fathom it. But still, a little reflexion shows that almsgiving, however it may soften individual hardships, must fail utterly in raising the condition of a class of sufferers. By giving money to those needlewomen you

only enable them the better to accept starvation prices. By charity indeed, it is obvious that a large number of them must be sustained already. Where whole classes are shown to be employed on wages insufficient to support life,—whatever food or coal tickets, or articles of clothing, are distributed to them by the clergyman or district visitor, whatever medicines or advice by the dispensary or the hospital, whatever relief of any kind by the union workhouse, is in plain English but *wages in aid*, and has to be added to the false cheapness of those prices which are wrung solely from their necessities. I have often wished that, from trade to trade, some one would make out the accounts-current of the workman with society —ay, and of the employer too,—so that we might see at once what trades in this England of ours are simply losing ones, and either to be put down or revolutionised altogether. The slop-seller who has made so many shirts, trousers, waistcoats, &c., would be credited with the value of her produce, reckoned on a yearly average, during her life: she would be debited, 1st, with the actual wages received; 2nd, with the amount paid to her in charity; 3rd, with the cost of medical relief received by her gratuitously; 4th, with the cost of so much of her consumption as she may have failed to pay for; 5th, with the amount which she has been compelled to earn by shame; 6th, with the cost of penal justice towards her, if she has rendered herself amenable to it; 7th, with the cost of workhouse relief up to and including the parish funeral. I believe such accounts-current would show in how many instances the cost of underpaid labour swallows up over and over again the meagre profit for the sake of which it is ground down, and how dear most of our cheap things really are. No, no, charity—unless it could be applied with the deliberate and, as it were, inexorable purpose of forcing up wages instead of, as it does, helping to keep them down,—charity, as hitherto practised, is no cure for these evils.

Nay, let me go further, though I should offend. Who dare talk of almsgiving in such a case? What is the meaning of "underpaid labour?" Robbery. God has said: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." That is a promise full as much as a command; but England makes that promise a lie—the needlewoman labours eighteen hours a-day and starves. Ready enough are we to justify workhouse stone-breaking and oakum-picking by the words, "He that will not work, neither should he eat;" but

very loath practically to admit that those words necessarily imply the very promise of Genesis, that he who will work *shall* eat. To go to these martyrs of labour with hands full of gold, and play the bountiful with them, would be at bottom only an insult to them and a lie to God. By their eighteen hours a-day of lifelong toil they have earned the *right* to a maintenance,—the money we think to give them, so far as by beating down tradesmen, by the idolatry of cheapness, by the mere neglect to inquire, and protest, and fight with the demon of competition, we have helped to bring them where they are,—the money we pretend to give them is *their own.*

"Protection," says another. I am a Free-trader; but God knows that if I thought protection would restore the condition of the labouring classes of England, I would strive for it to-morrow. But I have been unable yet to see what the restoring of protection could do for the purpose. Free-trade is of yesterday; the fall in wages is constant. Even at Spitalfields, some at least of the workmen have seen enough to tell you that they have driven the French out of the market; and yet the people are starving whilst they are being driven out. Is it foreign competition that affects the sempstresses? Is it the French or the Americans who are deluging us with cheap coats, cheap trousers, cheap great-coats, cheap shirts? Was it a Frenchman that brought down the prices of stay-making? Was it a French butcher that took the workhouse-girls to make cheap embroiderers of them? So far as the cry for free-trade springs from the mere idolatry of cheapness, so far as it is not connected with an earnest desire to break down commercial barriers, put an end to the demoralizing practice of smuggling, and bind the nations of the earth closer and closer into one family, I am ready to condemn it with Mr. G. F. Young himself; but who does not see that the cry for protection is, in the mouth of the great bulk of its utterers, but a cry for agricultural protection,—that is to say, for the shutting out of *food* from the starving millions of a country that does not produce enough for its own subsistence? Who does not see that its advocates are full, in fact, of all the worst elements of selfishness and mammon-worship of the opposite party, and are only willing not to buy cheap lest they should no longer be able to sell dear? So that the difference between the two parties is only an issue of fact as to the better machinery of extortion. It is under protection that wages have been ever sinking; under

protection that profits have got to be wrung from the very subsistence of the workman. Restore protection to-morrow, who can reckon what homœopathic proportion of the increase in prices would go into the artizan's pocket?

Emigration is the next cry, and the most successful one. And here, too, God forbid that I should seek to cast discredit upon the work of Emigration itself, or upon the still nobler one of colonization. The command "to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it," is still binding upon every one of us; and so long as there are hills and plains untenanted by man, or, if tenanted, unsubdued to fruitfulness and beauty—ay, so long as there shall be a Sahara desert in the world—all hail to him who goes forth in the spirit of the primeval blessing, conquering and to conquer! And still more, whilst England owns vast realms beneath every clime, and within every ocean, is it her duty as a nation, as a society, to send forth, not scattered adventurers, nor shoals of convicts or paupers, but genuine swarms from the parent Saxon hive, able to plant from shore to shore the New Englands of the future, each endowed from the first with a full portion of the elements of her own organic life, the parish and the jury, the *habeas corpus*, the free press, the Parliament, the Church. But whilst mere emigration may profit the individual, and colonization the country colonized, and eventually society at large in the mother-country, it is but a palliative for the radical evils of competition. It is a mere pumping or baling out of water whilst there is a leak open. The pumping would at most be sufficient, if it could so far check the swelling flood as to allow the leak to be discovered; but to those who know, or think they know, where the hole lies, any great scheme of emigration must seem a ruinous and deadly delusion. We may willingly admit that the misdirection of previous emigration has produced that disproportion of the sexes, at home and abroad, which renders the emigration, or rather (for indeed it is a question of mercantile account more than of philanthropy) the exportation of a certain number of surplus females at home to lands where the male population is redundant, a matter of present expediency. But how many of the 15000 needlewomen of the metropolis must be thus exported to force the wages of the remainder from 3*d.* a-day, or say even 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week, to (as they are termed) living prices, say 7*s.* a-week (small pittance

enough for a Christian woman)? And at what cost is this to be effected? And when you have tried the experiment upon one trade, upon how many others must you not try it, since so many classes of workmen there are that do not receive "living prices" for their labour? And how often must these experiments not be renewed, as the beating-down system proceeds? And how can any one trade be adequately thinned, whilst there are two millions of paupers ready to fill every gap? God knows it is with a heavy heart that one is thus compelled to throw cold water, as the phrase goes, upon the schemes of noble, self-devoted men; but from the bottom of my heart I am compelled to say it: Emigration is no adequate remedy for the evil—for the wrong.

And where is the remedy? It lies not in any system or theory, not in any party cry or economical machinery, but in a thorough change of spirit. "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!" must be the cry of this whole nation. We must feel that we are members of one society, having common profit and common loss; members of one Church, many members under One Head; members, to use that most wonderful saying of the apostle, members "one of another." We must learn to feel that all property, all talent, all strength, all learning, all labour, is but a trust for the benefit of all; ay, learn that of all of these gifts of God, and not of one of them only, does that startling axiom of Proudhon—"Property is a theft!"—become very truth, when each is enjoyed for self alone, without sense of duty to God or to our neighbour. When once we feel this, we shall cease to put our trust in any single panacea, we shall use every means in our power to extirpate the evil, from our hearts first, and then from our lives. But we shall see, indeed, with sorrow, that this universal civil war cannot cease at once; that competition must be attacked with its own weapons; that mere justice requires that a machinery should be set on foot to force wages up, instead of that complex one now existing to force them down.*

So far as it may tend, by letting blood, to deplete some gorged

* Do these appear strong expressions? A high rate of wages is acknowledged to be a good by the greatest of living political economists, Mr. Mill; as, for instance, when he says, in speaking of combinations amongst workmen, that, "if it were possible for the working-classes, by combining among themselves, to raise or keep up the general rate of wages, it need hardly be said that this would be a thing not to be punished, but to be *welcomed and rejoiced at*."

vessel of the body politic, emigration will for the time be encouraged; especially should it be encouraged by those for whose special benefit it takes place—by the colonies whose wastes it tills; nay, whose crops it reaps, rotting for want of shearers; whose flocks it consumes, instead of leaving their wholesome flesh to be boiled down for tallow, and then cast out for manure. The promotion of emigration, out of the proceeds of the sales of colonial lands, is a solemn duty incumbent alike upon the colonies themselves and upon the Government of this country. And such a system, if based upon a judiciously fixed upset price of colonial lands, would afford a self-regulating principle to emigration itself, since only so many emigrants would be called for as would till the lands required for the time being for cultivation by the increasing demands of colonial society.

Again, the re-adjustment of certain fiscal duties might do much for the relief of particular classes. I have been assured by an operative that the duties on foreign boot-fronts have been reduced by the tariff reforms of the last few years, in a degree wholly disproportionate to that of the reduction of duties upon foreign leather; and the fact, relied on once with triumph by a free-trade morning newspaper, of the enormous import of French boot-fronts, becomes thus the index to a cruel amount of suffering amongst the operative boot-makers and closers. The remedy is here, not the raising of the duty on the semi-manufactured, but the lowering of it on the raw foreign article; not more protection, but a larger measure of free-trade. A careful revision of the Customs Tariff, with a due attention to the interests of the operatives, and with the aid of their own experience and advice, would probably detect and remove many similar grievances.

Charity, too, and Philanthropy, must open their eyes upon the purport of their own doings. New employments must be found for women. The prison, the asylum, the workhouse, the school, must entirely abstain from underselling the labourer by their ruinous competition; instead of being used to the ruin of existing trades they might be made, as Mr. Geary has partly shown at Norwich, the experimental workshops of the country, in which all new processes should be tested, through which all new branches of industry should be introduced; besides the boundless field opened to them in the production of food.

Government should put a stop at once and for ever to the iniquitous system of accepting contracts at the lowest tender, without inquiring into the morality of each contract. Whatever officials may say in reply to Mr. Shaw, the funds drawn from the hard-wrung taxation of the nation, of which the control is entrusted to them, are not to be disposed of as by a soulless, grinding machinery, but as by conscious, responsible, God-fearing men. If the colonels of the British army require 600*l.* a-year in addition to their regular pay, let that be paid to them from additional supplies, and not ground out of the flesh and blood of the operatives. If the contract system is to be persevered in, let a fair price be settled by competent judges, and the contract given to some fair-dealing man, who shall pay to his work-people "living wages"; let the payment of such living wage, if needful, be made a condition of the contract; if it be needful, let a Government officer see that living wages are paid. If, on the other hand, the prices of clothing have fallen so low, and the Christian feeling has so gone out of the hearts of the clothiers that it seem impossible so to do, then let Government take the work into its own hands; deal directly with the work-people; pay them "living wages" without the intermediate profit of a contractor. There is no reason why there should not be Government clothing-workshops, as well as Government dockyards. One thing is certain, that a pitiful economy of some hundreds of thousands of pounds on clothing contracts is a ruinous as well as a diabolical make-weight for the mass of starvation and prostitution which it is shown to create. And, as gentlemen and as Christians, let the colonels be the first to urge this reform; let them be ashamed of drawing their "off-reckonings" from the prostitution-wages of the female slop-workers, nor seem any longer to have taken for their motto the *non olet* of a Vespasian.* Let petitions to this effect be prepared, and showered in upon Parliament on the very first day of the session; nay, let the Throne itself be approached in the meanwhile, that all practicable steps may be taken by the Government for initiating the reform; and that in the royal speech, if need be, may be contained a recommendation to the Commons to devise the best means of improving the Government clothing

* I am informed on high authority, that the difference between living wages and prostitution wages for the slop-workers would not exceed, for each colonel, the sum of 40*l.* a-year! (1852.)

system, with a view to the better remuneration of the operatives employed.

But much, much must be done by the operatives themselves, who, indeed, have undersold one another as madly as the capitalists. Not by strikes and combinations, though even these have their worth, as Mr. Mill shows in his great work. But the worth of combinations and "national holidays" is at best only negative. Surely, surely this society of ours must have come to a strange unnatural pass, when for the sake of a maintenance, or of a better maintenance, men are obliged to "strike work." To strike work! What, with half the physical world yet waste, and the other half perhaps not bearing a tithe of its possible fruits—with half the human race a set of unclad savages—is it time to "strike work" even for a day, even for an hour? Did he who said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," did He not say also, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done?" A secret instinct tells us, that so long as the mill-gear stands ready, so long as the cotton-bales are at hand to feed it, there is a wrong done to nature and to man by the operative refusing to obey the call to labour. It may be that there is a greater wrong to be avoided thereby; it may be that where labour is all that he has to sell, inaction is a lawful resource against the depreciation of its price, a fair weapon in that deadly battle of competition; but are there no better ones? Is not labour itself a weapon? Or is the workman himself the only man who is never to learn how to use it? This indeed would be a positive, instead of a negative action; this indeed would be fulfilling the command, "to eat bread in the sweat of his face," instead of, as it were, against his will prevaricating with that command.

But how? There appear to be two means by which the working man can peacefully and successfully contend against the twofold evil of the low wages which he receives for his work, and of the high prices he has to pay for his food and other articles of consumption. The latter may be met by the plan described by the correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle* for the Manufacturing Districts, in speaking of the "People's Mill" at Leeds.

The People's mill grinds corn of all kinds, and supplies to its large circle of proprietors flour and grain, perfectly unadulterated, and as near cost price as the actual working expenses will permit. The number of

members is about 5000, and the vast majority are working-men. Each pays 1*l.* 1*s.* entrance money. There is no yearly subscription. The average amount annually saved by the subscribers was computed by the managing miller as about equal to each member's subscription; that is to say, the flour in the mill can be had so much cheaper than the same flour in shops, as to save an ordinary family about a pound in the year. The great advantage, however, looked to is the purity of the article.

It is obvious that this plan can be made applicable, and far more easily, to butchers' and bakers' shops, and, in fact, to every establishment of retail trade. Under the name of "Protective Unions," the system, it has been stated in the *New York Tribune,* is very prosperous in Boston, and is rapidly extending itself throughout New England and New York; under that of "Co-operative Stores," it is familiar to our own country.

Against low wages a remedy may be found in the "Associations Ouvrieres," or Working Associations, the most practical result as yet of the February revolution, and which have made such progress in France, during the past year, (1849.) I have before me a bundle of deeds of settlement and regulations belonging to these associations, which space alone prevents me from referring to at length.* The tailors, who are sixty men on an averge at work, with about 300 "adherents," have been working for the last twelvemonth on equal wages,† and have realized 6*l.* per cent. profit on a business of 400*l.*† a-year. Another tailors' association at Bordeaux, thirteen men in all, netted 8000*f.* profit in four months, working by the job, but with an equal right to dividends. The arm-chair makers (*menuisiers en fauteuils*), seventy in number, began with a capital of 504*f.*, and have a business now worth 100,000*f.* a-year. The cabinet-makers (*ébénistes*), in the same yard—the Cour St. Joseph, in the Faubourg St. Antoine—have, like them, much more work than they can get through, and work so well that they are able to sell somewhat dearer than their capitalist rivals. The cooks, who unfortunately are divided into several rival associations (some of which have failed), can afford to give the working-classes as good a breakfast at four sous as they can obtain elsewhere for ten. The paviours, who have two associations, have got into their hands by tender a large portion of the paving of Paris. To that extent has the movement spread, that 104 associations, by their delegates,

* See now Tract IV. on Christian Socialism, "The Working Associations of Paris."

† They have long since resumed piece work. (1852.)

are now engaged in forming an *Union des Associations**, the main object of which is to establish what is termed by them a "mutuality of credit," by means of exchange-bonds, payable in labour and produce,—a great idea, the main developement of which is owing to a gentleman well known by his abolitionist efforts, and now a resident amongst us, M. Jules Lechevalier. In America also, the working-classes have their eyes open to these experiments. The *New York Tribune* advocates them. In Boston there is already a "Tailors' Associative Union," whilst in Pennsylvania the *Philadelphia Ledger*, speaking of a strike amongst the Boston tailors, has pointed out that

> Their emancipation is in their own hands, if they will direct their *hands* with *their own heads*, instead of allowing them to be directed by the heads of others. They must alter the system, which they can do peacefully and effectually, without infringing the rights of anybody. But how can they alter it? Merely by doing that in concert which their employers do singly—work for the public. . . . . The remedy of labourers is combination, not competition; and combination to work in partnership, instead of not to work at all.†

In our own country, though Mr. Babbage in his "Economy of Machinery and Manufacture," and Mr. Mill in his great work, have both openly advocated the associating the labourer to a share in profits; although Mr. Mill has declared, that "to this principle, in whatever form embodied, it seems to him that futurity has to look for obtaining the benefits of co-operation, without constituting the

* Since put down by government.

† It would be impossible within any reasonable limits to detail the progress of associative labour or associative consumption in the United States of America and the Continent of Europe, since the above pages were written. In France, Working Associations have spread over the whole face of the country; they are reckoned by the hundred in Paris, they are to be found in almost every provincial town; whilst associations for purposes of consumption, or as we should call them, Co-operative Stores, are rapidly gaining ground in the rural districts; and the produce of French associative labour has exhibited itself in our Crystal Palace, and won prize medals and honourable mentions; and this success has been achieved in spite of all discouragement and opposition by the government (five associations in Lyons out of eight were ruined by official persecution in two years); and they are now wholly put down in the three departments of the Rhone, the Drome, and the Isere. In Belgium, the same movement is slowly and surely spreading. In French Switzerland, Geneva is in like manner a centre of associative labour. In Piedmont, Turin and Genoa number several Associations, and a journal devoted to the cause is published thrice a week. In Saxony and Prussia, though the tidings from these countries are scanty, there is reason to believe that the same influence is at work, since in the latter kingdom a flourishing co-operative society has been put down by the government, as being "injurious to the vested interests of the tradesman." In the United States, lastly, associative efforts are taking place in every large town and city of the North, and the Working Moulders of Cincinnati have already achieved a wide reputation. (1852.)

numerical majority of the co-operators an inferior caste;" and notwithstanding the examples of co-operation afforded by the miners and fishermen of Cornwall (the latter of whom are shown to beat the Yarmouth, as well as the Irish fishermen on their own coasts) and also by the crews of whaling ships,—little seems to havs been done with success towards the creation of joint-stock operative associations. The joint-stock woollen mills of the West Riding of Yorkshire, of which interesting accounts were furnished by Mr. Aldam to the Commons' Committee on Joint-stock Companies in 1844, and published by them in the Appendix to their Report, afford perhaps the nearest approach to the working out of the principle, although the achievement of co-operation, not amongst operatives properly so called, but amongst small manufacturers.

The principle of association appears to me the only effectual remedy against this fearful beating down of wages below "living prices," against this fearful realizing of capitalists' imaginary profits out of the starvation and degradation of the workman. Let this principle be applied, not in one shape, but in a thousand. In those trades where fair profits can yet be obtained, without trenching upon the due share of the operative, let him be simply and at once associated to the profits, that the marriage between capital and labour may be established upon a firm basis. In those trades where the profit has been annihilated by a delusive cheapness, let the operative endeavour to supply as far as possible the place of capital by combination and an exchange of labour. And let those who feel with me that the operative has need to be sustained in this effort to rescue himself from his present thraldom, and that all who, wittingly or unwittingly, have contributed to bring him into that thraldom, lie under the deepest responsibility towards him,—let all such now contribute their counsel, their funds, their custom, to further his deliverance.*

Even though it should not be by aiding the formation of Working Associations, let it be by promoting those "protective unions" of the United States, those "Co-operative Stores" of our own

* The formation of such operative partnerships might probably be greatly assisted by some special law, such as relate to friendly societies, savings' banks, building societies, and loan societies,—the last-named associations for the most part wholly unworthy of the privilege. But the whole law of partnership in England stands in need of enlargement and reform.

country, whereby the operative classes may be enabled by combination to purchase their provisions and the raw materials of their labour at wholesale prices, and so avoid the extortion of the hucksters and cheap provision shops. Even though it should not be by the formation of co-operative stores, let it be by that of labour marts or exchanges, under proper regulations, and which might be usefully annexed to model lodging-houses, as proposed in France, with reference to the analagous *Cités Ouvrières*, to replace those fatal houses of call and pot-house reckonings, which are shown, in a letter respecting the condition of the tailors, to be the ruin of so many workmen: or again, of permanent bazaars or shops, where the produce of the workman's labour may be sold at a price which shall fairly renumerate him, and defray the outgoings, without seeking a further profit. And even apart from such attempts of associative benevolence, let us endeavour, every one of us, to conquer the mammon-worship in our own hearts, which has transformed for so many the idea of cheapness into a very article of faith, which so often tempts even the calmest to make his own small profit out of some "tremendous sacrifice;" let us endeavour to ascertain who are the fair-dealing and "honourable" tradesmen, and deal with such; or still better, to find out the individual operative, and employ him directly, with the firm purpose of "doing unto others as we would be done by," of not seeking to drive a bargain with improvidence or want. What, if we are cheated sometimes—often? These men and women have been defrauded for years of the due reward of their labour; and we have helped to defraud them. Surely, surely, long ere these their cries pierced the thick deafness of our sloth and self-love, they had entered the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth!

But let us be deaf no longer. Let every sect and creed enter into friendly competition for improving the condition of the people of England. Let the Church especially put forth all her strength to grapple with the hundred-headed evil. She has been supine far too long. As I look upon her benefices and episcopal sees, upon her deacons, her priests, and her bishops, I seem to see the skeleton of a great army, the battle-field of a holy warfare; all the strongholds are occupied—officers to command them there are plenty, but the privates are nowhere, or fighting on their own account. What are all our religious societies, but irregular par-

tizans, guerilla bands, ill-armed and ill-disciplined, too often unscrupulous in their means of warfare? Let the parish on the one hand cease to be a mere "geographical expression" (to adopt the Austrian's insolent language about Italy); let it become a centre of radiating life; let it be no more for the working-classes a mere dispenser of legal relief, but the source and focus of all local action; let the poor be no more helped *in* their poverty but helped *out of* it,—by parochial lodging-houses, parochial baths and wash-houses, savings'-banks, friendly meetings between class and class, and every other institution which can be brought within the compass of parochial efforts and parochial control. On the other hand, let all those scattered seeds of Catholicity, which the huge landslip of the sixteenth century has buried far underground, be set free to vegetate once more by a deeper labour of the plough, and we shall see them, from our lighter and richer Protestant soil, casting forth shoots far healthier and more vigorous than even the rankest growths which have yet pierced the thick clay of Romanism. Let the Protestant orders of both sexes, bound by no vows, go forth in joyful self-devotion to battle with the wretchedness and the vice of England. The Training Institution for Nurses in Fitzroy Square, Mrs. Fry's or Miss Sellon's Sisters of Mercy, are but the merest germs of future religious Socialism. The care of the sick, the reformation of the prisoner, the government of the adult pauper, the training of the pauper child, are all works which, I am firmly convinced, can never be adequately performed either by mere mercenary labour or skill or by solitary self-devotion, but which require both a special and religious vocation in the individual, and the support and comfort of an organized fellowship. We must have Orders of nurses, Orders of prison attendants, Orders of workhouse masters, workhouse matrons, workhouse teachers, perhaps parish surgeons,—bodies of men and women that shall show forth in its purity the essential Communism of the Church, and leaven the whole of society with a spirit of self-devoted industry. Let such a spirit once go abroad, let it raise labour to the rank of a sacred duty, the holier in proportion to its very arduousness and repulsiveness, and the word "Penitentiary" will no more be a shameful lie, nor the word "Workhouse" a promise unfulfilled; our wastes will be cultivated, our marshes drained; the soil shall no more be robbed of its fruitfulness by wasteful cultivation, nor neg-

lected by slothful ignorance; our polluted rivers shall no more bear away to the sea the exhaustless wealth of the sewage of our towns, nor our atmosphere grow thick with the wasted carbon of our smoke; the well-drained houses of our airy streets shall no more breed fever and pestilence, sweeping away children, shattering the frame of the adult, already weakened by starvation-wages; feelings of mutual sacrifice, confidence, and love, will gradually supplant those feelings of mutual encroachment, of mutual distrust and hatred, which now estrange class from class, and man from man; the very word "Society" will seem too foreign and merchant-like to express the mutual relations of Englishmen, and in good old Saxon phrase, used of yore for kingdoms as for republics, England will be truly one Commonwealth and one Church.

Do these words seem visionary and ideal? Would it not be better anyhow to try how nearly we can realise them, than to measure how far we fall short of the promise they hold out, as an excuse for folding our arms and doing nothing?

J. T.

Two years have passed over our heads since the above pages were written, and how stands now the question of "Labour and the Poor" in this England of ours? So nearly where it was, in almost every respect, that scarcely a word has had to be altered in them. The "Female Emigration Committee," whatever invaluable benefits it may have conferred upon individuals, has found itself wholly inadequate to grapple with the mass of London female destitution. Its first Report, dated in March 1851, showed a total of 409 female emigrants sent out, of whom only 79 are set down professedly as needle-workers, and 11 as shirt-makers, and of whom perhaps it is not too much to say, that not more than one half can be reckoned as belonging to that mass of 15,000 women whom Mr. Mayhew exhibited to us as composing the class. 200 out of 15,000—one-seventy-fifth of the whole, in the very flush of public interest in the experiment,—it is not at this rate that the thinning of the labour-market can be accomplished. *Morning Chronicle* letters, Exeter Hall meetings, public attention universally excited, a Committee studded with noble and reverend names, the emigration of 409 women in a year, what do they seem to have produced?

To judge by Moses's latest, compared with some earlier price-lists, a trifling increase in the price of the lowest shirts, which, assuming the whole to go to the worker, would not amount to more than a farthing a shirt. And we are told that the colonists will not receive women of tainted character; and we are told that they will have good workers only, and not slop-workers; and public liberality seems to have spent itself, and in the course of another year, to judge from past experience, the Female Emigration Fund will be exhausted. . . . . Bitterly have the facts confirmed the warning given above: "Emigration is no adequate remedy for the evil,—for the wrong."

Yet except the emigration scheme,—except increased facilities given for the establishment of lodging-houses by the Act of the 14 and 15 Vic., c. 34, and the formation of a new society under the patronage of Lord Ingestre, for the purpose of bettering the lodgings of the poor,—except the founding of a couple of day-nurseries, as before observed, in London and in Manchester, nothing effectual has been done by philanthropy. The contract system is still fostered by Government, and grows ranker on all sides, and in every department of industry. £200,000 are shown to have been lately wasted by the state in the purchase of poisonous garbage from Moldavia, on a contract for the supply of "preserved meat" to the Navy. Not a clothing colonel has yet had the decency to pay again out of his own pocket the 30*l.* or 40*l.* a-year which the workers on his soldiers' uniforms, instead of receiving as the lawful and honest reward of their labour, have to wring from the passing drunkard and profligate. A Parliamentary Committee has sat on the army estimates, and deliberately blinked the subject.

Two only of the remedies pointed out in the previous pages have assumed permanent and growing importance;—Co-operative Stores on the one hand, as a means of cheapening the consumption of the worker,—Associative Labour on the other, as a means of raising his earnings, by transferring to labour and skill the profits hitherto monopolised by capital, after a due hire shall have been paid for its use. The former have been not only found to be scattered over the manufacturing districts of England and Scotland in far greater number than was imagined, but have spread with enormous rapidity during the past two years, and are assuming on all sides

a form which essentially distinguishes them from the old joint-stock company, that of a return of profits according to the dealings of members, and not according to the amount of their shares in the capital. At least two hundred of these are studded over the factory counties, at intervals of scarcely more than two or three miles in some parts, besides some fifty perhaps in the south, and at least a hundred in Scotland. Working Associations, on the other hand, have taken firm root in London, and are slowly spreading themselves through Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, and other centres of industry; in London they already contribute to the welfare of the working-classes a sum of from 7000*l.* to 8000*l.* yearly in wages, all of which is under their own control, and is independent of profits, whilst great factories have been set up in Lancashire by plain, rough, working-men; and the very "aristocracy of the trades," the Iron trades, are now forced upon co-operation by a "Masters' Strike."

Even without the pale of the so-called co-operative movement, the principle that, in one most distressed class at least, that of the needlewomen, the earnings of labour have been reduced so low that it is time for Christian benevolence to interfere, has been recognised in the establishment of an "East-end Needlewomen's Workshop," in which the whole profit, after payment of interest on capital and a due remuneration for superintendence, is to be laid out for the benefit of the workers; an institution presided over by Lord Shaftesbury, and which it is to be hoped, will be enabled to work in perfect harmony with the Female Emigration scheme, several of whose most active promoters are on its superintending committee.

And what is far better than all this,—there has gone forth throughout the length and breadth of the land, a longing for unity, for mutual help and brotherhood. The working associations of London have banded themselves together in one Union; the co-operative bodies of the north have met together in conference once and again, to deliberate upon their common interests, to seek means for more intimate connexion and fellowship. A Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations has been set up, and has served as a centre to bring various classes together, clergymen and lawyers, medical men and men of science, noblemen and capitalists, with tailors and shoemakers, with needlewomen and printers,

and plasterers and bakers, and silk-weavers, and working engineers, and others whom space would fail me to number; and those clergymen and lawyers, those medical men and men of science those noblemen and capitalists, have gone to the working-men, not to make a profit out of them, but to help them to make profits themselves; not to rule over them, but to enable them to govern themselves; not to bestow upon them ostentatious alms, but to help them by advice and assistance, and by money lent, not given, to raise themselves and their children above the need of alms. And the watchword of this new undertaking has been Christ and His Gospel, Christ and His Kingdom; Christ's claim to sovereign lordship over the week-day as over the Sunday, over the tradesman's counter and the employer's workshop as over the pulpit and the pew; and the special duty has been assigned to the Council of Promoters of the new Society to "diffuse the principles of co-operation, as the practical application of Christianity to the purposes of trade and industry,"—whilst side by side with the former body has grown up another, which, under the name of the "Central Co-operative Agency," has proclaimed itself to be founded upon the principle "that trade, exchange, distribution of goods, are trusts to be administered alike in the mutual interests of producers and consumers, not to be conducted as matters of speculation; That any adulteration, fraud, falsehood of any kind, in price, quantity, or quality, is a misdemeanour, and should be dealt with as such by public opinion, and by each individual producer and consumer, in the absence of the law." Lastly, Parliament has been approached on the subject of those laws of partnership, which are a practical denial of justice to Associative Labour, and has been twice urged by its own Committees to take steps for wiping out this blot from our statute-book.

And O, thank God, His Church has not remained idle in this work; but from all denominations and sects, earnest men have been drawn together, not into a new and untried brotherhood, but into a fuller manifestation of that world-wide brotherhood which was sealed with the blood of the Elder Brother. Party newspapers may sting and sneer; *Records* may write with oil of vitriol, and *Guardians* with dilute sugar of lead; the *Quarterly* may respond with calumnies to the dogmatism of the *Edinburgh* or the *Eclectic;* and the *Reasoner* speak of blasphemy, and the *Daily News* of

nonsense; enough that here and there some *Christian Remembrancer* or *Scottish Magazine* should—not praise the doers of the work, for praise they seek not,—but acknowledge the reality of the evil, and the righteousness of the remedy; enough, that Independent ministers at Manchester, and Baptist at Padiham, at Newcastle, and many others besides, should be found warring the same war with many a Clergyman of the Established Church in town and country,—that a Bishop should have been attacked in the columns of the Licensed Victuallers' Press for bestowing his custom on associated working-men, and defended,—O hear it with shame ye smooth writers of clerical finicalities,—by the *Weekly Dispatch!*

And if indeed one of the so-called leaders of the Chartist body, Mr. Ernest Jones, has thought fit to attack in no measured terms, and with no choice of argument, the growing co-operative movement, I rejoice to feel that the more earnest and thoughtful part of that body have taken no part in the attack; nay, that its very organ, the *Northern Star*, has shown itself to be an exponent of true democracy by supporting a work which must be the ruin of mere demagogueism. Nor yet can Mr. Ernest Jones's attacks, bitter though they may be, produce ought but a good effect on the movement at large. Warnings against the profit-mongering spirit, which might have been neglected in the mouth of friends, will have their due weight at last when sharpened into reproaches, exaggerated into calumnies, at the hands of an opponent. Gold fears not the fire, and if the work of co-operation be what we believe it to be, all the flames of hatred and rancour will but help to purge away its dross.

Friends! brothers! much has been done, but more, far more, a thousand times more, remains yet undone. The seed is indeed planted, and has shot above ground; but it has yet to grow, to give shade, to bear fruit. The seedling must be strengthened with many a prop, watered with unfailing dews, pruned, when there shall be need, with unsparing hand. And remember, O remember ever, that though Paul may plant, and Apollos water, yet it is God Who giveth the increase; ay, that whatever cunning systems we may devise in our own minds, not we, but God, shall give the grain a body as it shall please Him, "and to every seed his own body." And knowing this, let us sow in hope, unwearied in well doing, well assured that the seed *will* spring and grow up, we know not

how, and that the sickle will be put in when the fruit is brought forth, " because the harvest is come.'

And what shall that fruit be? the fruit which is not suffered to rot in the ground, or to sow itself again like the wild weed, but which is gathered into the garners, for wholesome food, and new labours of the plough? Not this or that political or social system; not co-operative stores, nor working associations, nor home-colonies, nor communities, — these are but the mere husks and shells that hold it, needful indeed to nourish it while growing, to protect it when ripe, but fit only to yield food to beasts and not to men. No, " the fruit of the spirit is love,—joy,—peace,—long-suffering,—gentleness,—goodness,—faith,—meekness,—temperance." Only when this our work of Co-operation bears such fruits will it approve itself as a true offshoot of the tree of life, whose very leaves are for the healing of the nations. This only can we say till then, to those who deride us,—and say it each day with a firmer and more indignant faith: "Not with you is the kingdom of God, who approve of a system in which the labourer's hire is kept back by fraud; in which false weights and false measures are the delight of the trader; in which it is made a fundamental axiom of economical science that men should seek their own interest, and do their own will, instead of doing the will of their Father and loving their neighbour as themselves; in which it is the rule that the more a man shall ask the less it shall be given to him, the more he shall need the more advantage shall be taken of him. If we stumble, if we stray into false paths often, if we grope clumsily still in the right ones, it is that our eyes are half-blind with the olden darkness,—dazzled it may be with the light of the new day. But in that light we seek, we claim ere long to walk, — ay, though it scorch and burn us,—and in so doing, we know that we shall approve ourselves the children of Him in Whom is no darkness at all."

J. T.

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